IMMIGRANT INDIAN MOTHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF PLAY AND PLAY’S RELATIONSHIP TO CHILDREARING GOALS:

A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This study investigates how traditional Indian culture manifests itself in the social setting of the United States (U.S.), paying particular attention to play activities, as well as understandings of play, from Indian immigrant mothers’ perspectives. More specifically, this study considers how Indian immigrant mothers describe their parenting goals and practices, as well as how play in its various forms may relate to the mothers’ childrearing goals. The data were generated through the qualitative method of the case study. The study’s findings suggest that, three immigrant Indian mothers recognize the restrictive view of play’s value in their children’s lives: they value school and life success and see play as a way to help with this. The participating mothers primarily consider play as a tool to stimulate their children’s learning and development. The mothers actively engage in their children’s play practices as facilitators, and they continuously try to improve their children’s skills through play and play-like activities. Equally importantly, the mothers see play as integrated with learning via specific play activities. The mothers accordingly tend to focus on their children’s learning outcomes rather than play itself. For this reason, the three immigrant mothers value play and offer a variety of ways to support and enhance their children’s playful learning.
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You shall silently reside in my heart akin to a dense lone full moon light...

Rabindranath Tagore

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving father

Late Tarapada Dutta Gupta
Chapter One

Statement of Problem

The threads of culture and parenting are interwoven to create the influential blanket of play in the child’s home. Encouragement is determined by the belief systems of the parents, which are a blend of their own culture and unique experiences as a child. However, when emerged into a host culture separate from their native culture, play values may change upon migration. This study is concern how play is considered for a child whose mothers are re-shaping their own cultural beliefs due to the influence of their child. With a specific emphasis on the Indian mother who has immigrated to the United States, this study will focus on her perception of play; whether play should be prevented or encouraged due the blended cultural backdrop of native Indian and dominant American culture.

Social scientists are aware that population shifts are becoming more and more common. Research by Adair & Tobin (2008) shows a significant increase in the percentage of immigrant children living in the United States. As the budding immigrant population continues to grow, it is important to understand the various ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, levels of parental engagement, family structures, and school performances that influence these immigrant children. Referencing the Migration Information Source, Zong & Batalova (2015) show that as of 2013, more than two million immigrants from India have settled in the United States. This report also claims that compared to other foreign and native-born populations in the U.S., Indian immigrants are not only highly educated, but also have higher household incomes.
increased growth of this particular population makes it crucial that we better understand the experiences, values, and beliefs of Indian immigrant parents.

In 1965 the Immigration and Nationality Act legalized the frequency of Asian-Indian migration to the U.S. According to Dasgupta (1998), “Current U.S. demographic accounts unequivocally declare that Asian Indian immigrants who came to the U.S. after 1965 have successfully acculturated to the North American environment” (p. 954). Data from the Pew Research Center (Drew, 2014) shows that the Indian-American population is not only the most highly educated of all the racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. but also has a higher social economic status (SES). In 2011, 72,438 Indians came to the U.S. with special-occupations status (H1-B visa; designated to work in U.S.) and have since successfully adjusted to life in their new country.

Recognizing the cultural assimilation of this immigrant population, this study perceives on the beliefs regarding play held by the middle- to upper-middle class of Asian-Indian Americans, a group that has seen steady academic and economic achievement in India as well as in the U.S. To achieve this success, the group has had to follow the trail of the traditional Indian cultural practices that prioritize educational engagements over play from early childhood. In the U.S., however, this group’s mothers are experiencing and being influenced by the dominant culture. As they understand the value of play, taking turns, sharing, imitating, competing, arguing, and reasoning, children develop a social, emotional, and intellectual ability, which are stressed in the dominant culture more so than in the heritage culture. As the mothers are more and more immersed in the dominant culture, play’s importance in family life and in children’s development and learning may become more apparent to them, or at least seen in a
different way.

For these immigrant Asian-Indian mothers, traditional Indian parenting practices may change upon migration to the U.S., allowing play to filter into long-held educational values. By way of the opportunities and influences from the dominant culture these immigrant mothers may come to view play as a valuable experience in early childhood and consequently encourage their children to engage in play. On the other hand, mothers may continue to view intellectual and academic achievement as more important than play, as in their traditional cultural practices. Perhaps another possibility is that mothers will modify their views and beliefs due to the drastic cultural shift. The mothers may begin to consider that through play, children can create new learning experiences all by themselves.

Researchers have studied how cultural practices and beliefs can be modified by immigration. Rogoff (2003), for example, highlights how cultural customs shift due to geographical change and the imposition of views from outside cultures. Research interest is awakened when thinking about Indian immigrant mothers who are rearing their children in a new culture. Is there some new synthesis of traditional Indian culture with the actual beliefs are created in the social landscape of the United States, especially in beliefs about play habits and ideation?

Parents’ views of play across culture

Parents’ understandings of the significance of play for children’s learning and development vary substantially. Roopnarine and Davidson (2015) highlight the intricacy of the correlation between play and culture. Discussions of this correlation tend to
emphasize variables within cultural settings, including the relative significance accorded to different family values and goals for children, which themselves are linked to historical and present-day conditions. Roopnarine’s (2012) review reflects differences in parental beliefs about play, as well as parents’ participation in play practices. Roopnarine also highlights how cultural variations impact parental beliefs and practices regarding play. In Western countries, parents tend to be more engaged with their children’s play practices, believing that play is important for cognitive and social development. In more traditional societies, however, parents often consider play as incidental to childhood development.

Mothers’ concerns about play are discussed in an international study done by Singer, Singer, D’Agostino, and DeLong (2009). The study highlights the varying perspectives of 2400 mothers’ from 16 different countries regarding the benefits of play, as well as play’s relationship to the experience of childhood and the loss of childhood in the modern world.

**Cultural traditions influence parents’ beliefs about play**

Parents and caregivers defer to the local cultural belief system in determining how to raise their children and how to prepare them for their future. Garcia Coll and Pachter (2002) explain; “Cultural traditions can influence parenting through the influence of family structure, residency patterns, childrearing practices, and beliefs and attitudes about the roles of children at different ages and stages” (p. 6). Cultural practices to which the parents are accustomed are passed down generationally and are not typically seen as strange, backward, or harmful unless examined from an external point of view. Thus, each culture has its own unique traditions and style of parenting, which influence parents’
practices, beliefs, and attitudes. Parents’ own views of play may include respect for play as a recreational but not educational activity and vice versa. Hence, parents may or may not encourage their children’s engagement in play. Studies highlight that parents’ belief systems about children’s play often reflect the views within their own cultures or how much the parents themselves were encouraged to play as children (Johnson, et. al, 2005; Roopnarine & Jin, 2012). Singer & Singer (2005) underline that parents who grew up with low levels of play facilitation fewer play opportunities tend to create the same types of play environments for their own children.

Parental belief systems influence childrearing practices

Irrespective of culture, parents adopt particular approaches to rearing their children that are based on their goals and values. Cultural beliefs consolidate parents’ behavior and activities, and these behaviors and activities are at the core of children’s everyday lives. As Tuli (2012) states, “These culturally shared ideas that parents have about are referred to as beliefs. They include parental explanations and understanding of everyday events, childcare customs and choices” (p. 81). Parental beliefs regulate parenting psychology, behaviors, and practices. Therefore, specific rituals derived from a culture and its practices shape parents’ considerations of play as a developmental resource. Moreover, “Beliefs are parts of the parents’ psychological system are systematically linked to parental action and different forms of that link may have different consequences for the life-world of developing children” (Lightfoot and Valsiner, 1992, p. 395, as quoted in Tuli, 2012, p. 82). Consequently, Roopnarine (2014) argues that culture and parents’ belief systems are interwoven. At the root of parental
Ethno-theories concerning play is a cultural model that may include values and norms concerning play. Since culture shapes the nature and variance of play as well as parents’ psychological values about childrearing practices, it is unsurprising that it has influences the manifestation of play in the home, too.

According to Super and Harkness’s (1999) “development niche” theory, culture helps guide and shape human development. Regularities within settings, customs, and cultural belief systems help organize experiences and construct rules that guide a particular culture (Cote & Bornstein, 2005). Parents’ views regarding the implications of play for children’s learning and development accordingly differ from culture to culture (Roopnarine, 2011). Family values, goals for children, parents-child relations, other interrelationships, and interactions with cultural settings affect whether play is perceived as a learning and development tool.

**Acculturation**

Because human development is a “cultural process” (Rogoff, 2003), cultural traditions and practices can be said to shift over time due to different circumstances that emerge. Geographical change, generational idea shifts, and the imposition of views from outside may all reshape cultural norms, practices, and beliefs. To help explain these types of cultural shifts, Berry (1997) has proposed a model of acculturation. Acculturation describes how individuals retain their traditional cultures when exposed to the beliefs and practices of other cultures. A gradual process, acculturation begins when one is exposed to new cultural experiences and adopts the beliefs and behaviors of the host culture without abandoning his or her culture of origin.
According to Berry’s model of acculturation, there are four types of immigrant adjustment and association to a host culture. An individual can assimilate (identify solely with the dominant culture and sever ties with his or her own culture); alienate (reject his or her own culture and the host culture); separate (identify with only the native culture and completely reject the host culture); or integrate (become “bicultural,” adopting characteristics of both cultures). Research suggests (Cote & Bornstein, 2005) that immigrant mothers’ inclination is to retain their own cultural beliefs upon migration but to gradually reshape their beliefs and thoughts. This applies to mothers’ understandings of play, too. Given that ethnic identity influences an individual’s beliefs, values, and practices, Asian-Indian immigrant mothers’ ethnic identity may also be influenced.

Asian-Indian immigrant mothers’ views of play may be affected or influenced by both the original and new cultures through the process of acculturation. As a researcher, it is my intention to uncover any changes in mothers’ beliefs and attitudes towards play and to understand the reasoning behind such changes. By documenting the mothers’ responses to their children’s play practices; this study hopes to better understand how their children affect their beliefs about play and home practices concerning play. Data was sought to understand how the change process has been seen to unfold as a result of the children’s effects on the family, as well as the traditional Indian mothers’ views, practices, and engagement in play with their children.
Mainstream/middle-class American parents’ views of play

Play is an integral vehicle for children’s early development

Indian parents’ preference for academics rather than play generally does not translate to an American context. Parents in the U.S. hold encouraging views regarding play. Studies show that American parents consider play an integral vehicle for early childhood development. They believe that through play, children’s physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development is improved (Parmer, Harkness, & Super, 2004). From an early age, children are introduced to a variety of learning opportunities, including chances to play. Roopnarine and Jin (2012) identified this positive view of play among white American and European families, describing them as having “cultures [that] readily acknowledge play as a central component of learning during the early-childhood years” (p. 444). In an environment in which play is considered as a self-constructed developmental tool, Elkind (2008) states, children are able to “create new learning experiences, and these self-created experiences enable them to acquire social, emotional, and intellectual skills they could not acquire in any other way” (p. 7).

Parents encourage extracurricular activities

In America, children’s participation in extracurricular activities is accepted and encouraged by parents; this is not conventional in Indian culture. The researcher has found that in the U.S., academic and athletic activities are regarded as complementary activities that help to stimulate the mind and body. Sports and clubs alike are considered pathways to friends, stress relief, and unique experiences. It has been found that most American parents have positive views of play. Therefore, learning through play is
encouraged in the early years of a child’s life. Parmer, Harkness, & Super (2004) confirm this, stating that “Euro-American parents were found to believe that play is an important vehicle for early development, while the Asian parents saw little developmental value in it” (p. 97).

**Indian parents’ views of play**

**Play does not foster development and learning**

Indian cultural beliefs revolve around the importance of education, and this significantly influences Indian parenting. Indian parents are closely involved in their children’s educations, teaching their children the importance of reading and studying during the children’s school-age years. Parents believe that child’s good grades and strong work ethics, and the parents’ own involvements are the recipe for success. Parents also believe that their responsibility is to raise their children to reach academic accomplishments that bring honor to the family. Commonly rejected is the notion that children’s play is an important psychological activity that fosters development and learning. Indian parents generally prioritize education over play, preferring to substitute studying for playtime if needed. Parmer, Harkness, and Super (2004) affirm this as the focus of Indian parenting, arguing that, “Asian parents stress the idea that getting a head start in early academics is important for the cognitive development of children in the preschool years” (p. 102). Their study also highlights that Indian parents do not consider play a developmental tool that helps to prepare their children for the future; parents instead prioritize early academics as way to stimulate cognitive development.
Education is more valuable than play

Although Indian parents allow their children to play they prefer their children to engage in studying. A study done by Chaudhary & Shukla (2014) finds that Indian parents value education over play, recognizing this as a deep-rooted traditional Indian belief. Because Indian parents are concerned about their children’s education, they prioritize educational engagements rather than play. Of course, as Chaudhary and Shukla point out, Indian children do play. This kind of play is frequently based on the materials available to the children. For examples, luko-churi (peek-a-boo), choa-chui (tag), kanamachi (blindfold game), and ami ja dekhi tumi ta dekho (I spy) are popular games in India. When children play, they generally interact with other children. When adults participate in children’s play, however, the activity quickly becomes more structured and “always seems to carry an additional objective, e.g., feed, teach or guide the child in specific ways” (p. 155).

As this study highlights, Indian parents are frequently anxious about creating better educational opportunities for their children. They are constantly trying to help their children reach advanced ability levels so that the children can compete with others. Even though there is an increased awareness among middle-class parents about how play can help teach children rules and boundaries, these parents cannot easily dismiss the longstanding tendency to value academics over play. As a consequence, play “often has to take a back seat in [Indian] family life” (Chaudhary & Shukla, 2014, p. 149).
Indian cultural heritage: the roots of Indian cultural traditions

India has a diverse population with various religious, political, and cultural views on childrearing. Socioeconomic status, familial expectations, education, and individual experiences may also influence childrearing practices and beliefs. Despite all these variables, there is one commonality: an emphasis on education beginning in early childhood, as parents believe that education will lead to stable futures for their children.

“Lekapora kore je garighora chore se…. Padhoge likhoge to bonege Nawab, kheloge kudoge to hoge kharab” is a common and longstanding rhyme in India. It means, “If you study well then you will be successful, and if you play too much you will rot.” This belief is deep-rooted in the Indian collective consciousness, suggesting that Indian parents have a strong respect for education. In India parents start to encourage their children to participate in academic activities at an early age so that the children can perform well academically throughout their lives. Put differently, parents stress to their children the importance of obtaining good educations and developing strong work habits as a means of ensuring prosperous futures.

Most Indian parents are very particular about their children performing well academically. They place greater emphasis on academics and text base learning than they do on playtime or extracurricular activities such as art or other hobbies. In India, parents’ strongly believe that giving children an early start with reading, writing, and numbers and not letting children “waste their time on play” ensures or at least aids in a child’s admission to a better academic school, which is the pathway to a high academic achievement and a prosperous future. Parents often teach their children to read before they even enter the school system, with the conviction that this will help the children to
achieve more when they do enter school (Zang & Carasquillo, 1995). Parents typically perceive play as enjoyment or recreation or pastime, however. This is because while play activities may be considered helpful for social and physical development, they are not necessarily considered useful for cognitive development.

The origins of Indian parents’ strong respect for education can be traced to Indian culture and religion. India is a predominantly Hindu nation. Indian rituals and scriptures emphasize the importance of education at a very early age. The Indian (Hindu) doctrine of the Vedas (which means “to know”) outlines the importance of achieving education. The principles of Hindu philosophy emphasize gyan (knowledge) as a means of relief from the agonies of life; they also stress mehnat (hard work) as necessary for success (Mau, 1997). Vedas, the fundamental authority on Hindu religion and philosophy, suggest that only through the acquisition of knowledge does one reach the final destination of mokha, or liberation from reincarnation (Sanghavi, 2010). It is believed that any weakness can be overcome with persistence and hard work.

According to Roopnarine and Gol-Guven (2016), “There is a high premium placed on educational achievement (gaan or knowledge) at the local and societal levels in India. The Vedas outline the importance of education and suggest that learning and acquisition of knowledge begins in childhood (Balya)” (p. 262). In the Vedic system, the education of a child began at age five with a ceremony called “Vidyarambha.” During this ritual the child learned the alphabets for the first time and worshiped the goddess of learning and knowledge, Saraswati. After that, the child was educated through a unique system called “Gurukulas,” or education that took place at the house of a guru (teacher). Parents sent their young children to this residential school, and under the direct
supervision of the guru, the child began his educational journey (girls were not allowed to be educated in Gurukul). The student was required to remain in school until the age of 24 at which time he was likely to enter family life. According to the Vedas, the seed of knowledge is rooted in Balya (childhood). Still today, during the month of February, Indians pray to goddess of knowledge, Saraswati and strictly follow the rituals for worshiping her. At schools, colleges, communities, and houses, the students pray to the goddess to achieve academic success. A recent study (Roopnarine & Gol-Guven, 2016) shows that Indian fathers tend to raise their children using these beliefs. The fathers are more focused on cognitive development from an early age. Therefore, rather than using playing, “fathers may use other mechanisms, such as storytelling and general conversations, to provide social cognitive stimulation to young children” (p. 262). Low levels of playful activities remain common in Indian culture, among Indian parents; specifically fathers and young children still a common practice in Indian culture.

Roopnarine and Gol-Guven study also argues that because of the influence of the religious scriptures (dharmasastra), parents’ emphasize learning and knowledge for their children concentrating on academic activities. Therefore, play does not factor into the early-childhood experience as it does in North American communities.

Overall, Indian parents’ desire for their children’s academic success is driven by a traditional mindset. Children are expected to do as well in school as they possibly can, as education is highly respected in Indian society. Parents push academic learning rather than the development of the imagination and innovation through play, at an early age. Play is generally considered a waste of time and energy (Malayankandy, 2014).

Malayankandy study states that, India is the member of International Play Association
(IPA) but that India does not promote the IPA’s declaration of the child’s right to play.

This study also highlights that Indian children who play do not typically have the freedom to explore woods and fields or find their own special places. Scripted teaching styles and the pressure of standardized tests result in the elimination of playtime. Therefore, children’s time is distributed between time at home with their parents and time at school and with their teachers rather than time spent on play activities. This study also highlights how Indian parents “are keener on the educational role rather than development of imagination and innovation…they play with the children with the purpose of education” (p. 224) and consider play and learning to be opposites.

**Family as a dominant and traditional institution in India**

In India, the family is the longest existing institution, regardless of the family members’ ages, changes, religions, and political views. Tuli (2012) argues that “[t]he family is central to all levels of social interaction and individuals are identified by the family they belongs to, by their fathers and their forefathers. The family is a hub of all activity from the day a child is born” (p. 82). Loyalty, integrity, and unity combine to form the foundation of Indian families and the Indian culture more broadly. Obedience to authority, passivity, and interdependence are highly valued. Parents traditionally have great authority over the lives of their children. Gawlick’s (1997) study showed that teaching values is very important for Indian parents. Mutual respect, especially for parents and elders; the maintenance of close family ties; hard work; and strong motivation for academic achievements are mentioned as some of the core values practiced and transferred from generation to generation.
As early as childhood, Indians learn to sacrifice individualism for the sake of the collective interests of the family. Hui and Triandis (1986) describe collectivism as the opposite of individualism: collectivism refers to “a sense of harmony, interdependence and concern for others” (p. 244). Extended family and kinship are two fundamental characteristics of Indian families. Traditionally in India, the word “family” means a joint family with at least three living generations: grandparents, parents, and their offspring live in the same household, contributing to and sharing a common income, food, values, and faith. Familial collectivism influences most aspects of Indian life, including childrearing, children’s future career choices, and children’s academic and play activities. Therefore, in India, the family is considered a dominant institution in the life of an individual, as well as in the community (Mullatti, 1995). Though the traditional joint family structure is changing due to the advent of urbanization and modernization among the younger generation, familial and kinship bonds continue to play important roles.

Sample

India is a nation characterized by cultural diversity and plurality on many levels. This study is limited to those who are part of the upper-class socioeconomic status group, however. More specifically, this study is constrained mainly to the immigrant mothers from the metropolitan city of Kolkata. As discussed earlier, there is significant diversity within India in terms of ethnicity, culture, languages, and recourses available. Therefore, studying one section of the population within a particular city cannot possibly represent all of India or even all of Kolkata. However, this study is a preliminary attempt to explore immigrant mothers’ beliefs and practices regarding play, as well as determine the
mothers’ goals for their children and where play fits into them. The study also considers how the mothers are navigating their core values now that they are in the U.S.

**Rationale for this study**

According to an Immigration Policy Center (IPC) report (2002), “Indian Americans represent one of the most visible and advanced communities in the country. Amazingly, they have done most of this in only one generation, from 1966 to present” (p.3). Subsequently, the participants in this study represent a special and particularly influential population of Indian-Americans, those who are economically, professionally, and socially successful. Since this specific immigrant population is knowledgeable and aware of the cultural practices of U.S., populaces see its members’ opinions, beliefs, and attitudes as a guide. This population has a significant role in the society and the community; accordingly, it is important to understand its members’ views and applications of play.

Studies about culturally specific parental belief systems regarding play in the U.S. exist but are limited in terms of their examination of mothers’ perceptions of influences on their beliefs about play. This study focuses on how traditional Indian culture manifests itself in the social setting of the U.S., paying particular attention to play behaviors and understanding from immigrant mothers’ perspectives.

As a child grows up, the possibilities for how he or she affects the family are endless. The influence of peers, school culture, and popular culture, infiltrates family life. It is expected that parents will influence their children, but few consider how children will influence their parents. Yet a child stimulates his or her parents’ beliefs, affecting
views and practices. A child often experiences an intermingling of familial influences and external forces, all of which he or she brings into the home. As a child becomes more culturally immersed, a family with traditional Indian values may difference its attitudes.

In the U.S., although there is considerable variation according to SES and other factors, play is not uncommon or overlooked by parents as it is typically in Indian culture. Most parents in the U.S. value and encourage play, believing that it can lead to healthy development. Many further endorse the ideas that play helps with school readiness (Parminder, Harkness, & Super, 2004) and have an educative function as well as recreational functions. As Indian mothers become more and more immersed in the dominant culture, play’s significance in family life and the child’s development and learning may become more distinct. Therefore, the parents in the new dominant culture may be said to influence the immigrant Indian parents with their expression of play beliefs and attitudes.

**Purpose of this study**

Over five decades have passed since the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 spurred the creation of an educated, middle-class, and homogenous immigrant Indian population in the U.S. Still today this population functions as a minority, with its beliefs and thoughts clearly distinct from the dominant Euro-American culture’s practices. As discussed earlier, it is important to recognize the cultural continuity or discontinuity of play beliefs and practices in the years after these immigrant parents’ arrivals. This study obtains reports from Asian-Indian immigrant mothers about their play histories and family narratives while in the U.S. More specifically, this interview-based dissertation
study relies primarily on self-reports and reflections of immigrant Indian mothers (though children are also interviewed), as well as the mothers’ perceptions of factors that influence their play beliefs (persistency and intrusion). This study also explores influences on children’s process of acculturation and adaptation as well as spouses’, peers’, and friends’ stimulation of the mothers’ play beliefs and practices. The study applies ecological system theory, the developmental niche framework, sociocultural theory, acculturation theory, and ideological becoming as guides.

The purpose of this study is to explore maternal reconstructions that include elicited information about how children influence parental beliefs and attitudes towards play. The play ideas or values that have been affected, as well as how and why it is initiated, are uncovered through studying the experience of parenting and analyzing the mothers’ answers to the target questions. Furthermore, this study seeks to understand which traditional beliefs are preserved and how they are maintained through family play practices and routines. The changes that have occurred in response to children’s influences as well as the influences of spouses, older siblings, and peers as conduits for general cultural adaptation and assimilation regarding play, comprise another line of this investigation.

**Research questions**

With all these this study is going to find the answers of the following research questions:

1. How the Indian immigrant mothers describe their parenting goals and practices, and how play, and different kinds of play, may relate to these
childrearing goals.

2. How did the mothers think their beliefs about play may have changed?

3. What they think about these changes?

4. How did they present the changes?

Research plan

Three New Jerseyan immigrant Indian mothers, each a separate case will be considered. The study will highlight the mothers’ conceptualizations of play to obtain data in attempting to answer the above research questions.

The three families will be studied over a period of time, usually two families will be studies each week, but over time the three families are together involved in the data generation phase of the dissertation. Data generation instruments include in-take questionnaires, drawing task, interview schedules, and observations on site with field notes, pictures of target child’s play (provided by the mother), telephone call to spot check, and a weeklong diary of the target child. The interviews are in-depth and entail embedded drawings of play scenes from the mothers’ memories and experiences of self and her child. The focus child in the study is 9 to 10 years old.

In this research interpretive schemes will be used in analysis to consider how play and play settings create benefits and/or liabilities and cause changes in the mothers’ beliefs. This study also explores the reasons for these alterations.


**Glossary of key terms**

*Acculturation*: a process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviors of another group.

*Asian Indian*: refers to recent immigrants whose roots can be traced to India (Spickard, 2001)” (Sanghavi, 2010, p.15).

*Attitudes*: a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

*Beliefs*: a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing.

*Culture*: a set of beliefs, norms, and practices that unify a group of people.

*Developmental Niche*: introduces a framework for examining the cultural structuring of child development. The developmental niche has three components: the physical and social settings in which the child lives; the customs of childcare and child rearing; and the psychology of the caretakers (Super & Harkness, 1986, p. 545).

*Immigrant*: a person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence (Roundy, 2013, p.1).

*Learning through play*: the process of learning through playing, being with other people, being active, exploring one’s environment, having new experiences, engaging in self-talk,
communicating with others, meeting physical and mental challenges, being shown how to do new things, practicing and repeating skills, and having fun.

**Parent belief system:** ideas and feelings toward a particular topic, such as play, that influence the level of tolerance parents allow for children to engage in play.

**Perception:** a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a thought, belief, or opinion.

**Play:** a self-directed and self-chosen activity in which young children commonly encounter different ways of communication and development. Moreover, play is a transformational (a “what if” or “as if”) behavior, thought, or action that is likely to be emotionally positive and manifest joy and physical spontaneity. Many scholars and others believe that play is a medium of learning, developing, and becoming.

**Views:** a particular way of considering or regarding something; an attitude or opinion.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relevant to this study. This chapter includes four main focus areas: (1) play and family; (2) theoretical framework; (3) culture; and (4) methodology.

Play and family

The benefits of play

Researchers, educators, and theorists continue to debate the impact that play has on the developmental learning of young children. A study by Hughes (1995) highlights the intellectual, social, and, emotional benefits of play at an early age. In his well-known research, Piaget (1962) establishes play as a mental and physical activity that helps to shape children’s intellectual, social, and physical interactions. Vygotsky (1966, 1978) stresses that play helps children not only to develop intellectually, but also to acquire social skills and to recognize cultural norms. Though diverse in their viewpoints, these scholars all consider play a vital part of children’s learning and development that leads to a resilient sense of self-confidence. As Roskos and Christie (2007) state, “Early experiences have a powerful effect on human development over the life span” (p. 87). Decades of research show that the quality of early life experiences help shape future learning and achievement. Play can be considered as a “concentrated form” of developmental propensities in which the relationship between instruction and development is evident (Singer et al., 2009). Playing, with parents and peers, as well as...
with objects such as water or blocks, helps shape and enhance children’s cognitive, social, and moral skills.

For example, we might consider pretend play-acting, a popular activity regardless of nationality or culture. Play-acting provides children with important insights into the connections between themselves and society. To many early-childhood researchers and educators, pretend-play acting allows children to create and explore the world around them through the performance of typically adult roles. Edmiston (2008) argues that imitation prepares children for adult social roles. By acting out family scenes featuring everyday occupations, such as those of a firefighter or a mom, children show an understanding of self-regulation. Through the imitation and repetition of such activities, children spontaneously assimilate ideas, through which they learn about social roles and values. When children play, they unknowingly practice societal norms. Though children do not face artificial limitations on their play, they inadvertently adhere to social rules. In regard to cognitive and emotional development, pretend play-acting helps to expand children’s vocabulary, thinking abilities, communication skills, and problem-solving skills (Singer et al., 2009). Done in combination with other children and caregivers, participation in play activities helps enhance children’s confidence to meet future challenges: play is the inadvertent progression of a child’s individuality and identity.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (Ginsburg, 2007) specifies in a clinical report that “[p]lay allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength” (p. 183). When children use their creativity and imagination, they are implementing rational thinking and appropriately expand their ideas. Sharing, taking turns, and exercising kindness all teach
children lifelong lessons. Children try to explore meaning through the endless possibilities presented to them in their play worlds. The limitless nature of play helps children learn about themselves, while learning about others. Simultaneously, children acquire knowledge about rules and consequences, as well as the possibilities of how objects can come together and fall apart. Regardless of whether play is categorized as a physical or mental activity, it facilitates the development of cognitive skills that help shape children’s notions about the world around them.

**Parents’ involvement in children’s play**

Research indicates that the family provides the first social context relevant to infants and young children (Parcel, Dufur, & Zito, 2010). By engaging, guiding, scaffolding, and monitoring children’s play, parents help shape children’s development. By many researchers it is established that parents are their children’s first teachers, but there are few non-universal variables: a family’s socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity, class, culture, religion, and structure can all play a significant role in facilitating parental participation and encouragement in their children’s lives (Bourdieu, 1984, as cited in Lareau, 1987).

As parents are the first socializing adults that children encounter, play is an important vehicle to initiate spontaneous development. Adults’ participation reinforces the children’s efforts and helps to maximize the learning. To help children develop new understandings, adults need to provide help and encouragement: a scaffolding to support experiences and enhance children’s knowledge. By directing and expanding on children’s play routines, adults can help children achieve mastery in virtually any subject. Gaskins
(2014) states: “Often, adults are encouraged to be active play partners to achieve both ends” (p. 13).

As those responsible for the tenor of the playful activities that children initiate, parents can stimulate various developmental domains for their children. As a result, children are able to stretch their abilities and reach subsequent levels of development. The theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as established by Vygotsky (1978), highlights the importance of adult participation, guidance, and collaboration in a children’s growth. According to Vygotsky, ZPD is the transfer of abilities from a shared environment to the individual. ZPD can also be defined as the distance between two levels of a child’s performance: the lower level, or the tasks the child can perform independently, and the higher level, or the tasks the child can do with support (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). Parents’ play an important role, as parents are children’s first knowledgeable social companions. With their advanced involvement in play, parents can help children to reach new levels of development. Therefore, with a parents’ participation in play, a child can build a strong foundation for his or her future.

As early childhood is the most fundamental time for development, a secure attachment between the parent and child is vital. Though parents’ involvement can have a substantial impact on child’s development (Schaub, 2010), this differs from culture to culture. Culturally shared ideas mean that parents often have specific understandings, or beliefs, regarding how raise children. Thus, culture can be said to play a significant role in parental beliefs about play and play practices. Undoubtedly, play depends upon the values, parenting, and childrearing styles expressed both by a given set of parents and the broader culture. Jiang (n.d.) states: “Parents’ play beliefs serve as a medium to pass down
cultural and societal norms to the next generation, thus affecting children’s play” (p. 2). In Asian countries, parents are inclined to follow traditional norms and practices and thus, education is prioritized over play and play is viewed as “the opposite to learning by parents and educators” (p. 2). Non-western parents often express this traditional cultural focus on academically driven early childhood experiences.

Adults have traditionally viewed play as something that children ‘just do’. Yet through spontaneous activity, children derive information and build their cognitive, physical, and social skills (Harkness & Super, 1996). Parents who understand the many benefits of play for children’s development (e.g., social, emotional, physical, and cognitive) are more open to encouraging a variety of play opportunities. When such opportunities arise, these parents prefer acting through play in order to engage and promote their children’s development. This understanding of play is not present across all cultures, however. Some cultures are more inclined to practice play to promote children’s academic.

Despite differences across cultures, parents everywhere are concerned about their children’s optimal development. For example, Indian families tend to stress education over play, as play is considered as a recreation and leisure. Even though Indian parents understand the benefits of play, they first consider social-cognitive skills. It is true that parents do engage in play in India: for instance, a family might play peek-a-boo while the children are getting ready to go to school. Engaging in play in this manner helps children to develop literacy and cognitive skills. Over time, however, Indian families allow academics to take precedence, and play starts to be considered as a reward or an activity that is permitted only when the children have free time.
Culture, play, and family

In most cultures, the role of play in childhood is dictated by a combination of familial beliefs and surrounding societal beliefs. Early childhood play is constructed, and practiced, according to the ecology of the family and community. Studies show that a family’s beliefs about children’s play often reflect the view expressed by the culture as a whole (Johnson, Christie & Wardle, 2005; Roopnarine & Jin, 2012). A child’s play activities and opportunities depend upon his or her particular cultural settings and the familial environment, which coexist in the household. Pramanik’s (2007) finds that family and culture (norms, practices, and requirements) primarily control the childhood as well as play engagements. Moreover, the educational system exerts a strong influence on the family and thus childhood.

The use and function of play in families varies from culture to culture. For instance, parents from Western cultures tend to consider, encourage, and value play as a developmental tool for their young children. As Johnson et al., (2005) points out, “In many Western cultures maximum benefits are believed to occur when parents aim for mutually interactive play with their infants and toddlers” (p. 183). Such parents clearly value play as a part of children’s learning. They also view their role in play as important. Researchers believe that “[m]any parents have a knack for providing children with appropriately challenging play experiences that nudge children to the next level of development (e.g., Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development)” (p. 184). Though this association among play, learning, and parental involvement is ideal, such parent-child interactions are not common to all cultures. Parents in other cultures may value children’s ability to manipulate their environments independently without interventions from
external stimuli.

In non-Western cultures, parents find it difficult to associate play with educational or developmental value. Rather, play is considered to be used only for physical fitness, social benefits, or recreation. The primary focus remains on “teaching children.” As a result, families within these cultures view play activities as indulgences and do not encourage children’s participation in them. Such traditional views are typically passed down through generations of families, meaning that parents are likely to continue to focus their children’s attention on academics, believing that this will help to secure the children’s futures (Saraswathi & Dutta, 2010). This puts pressures on more natural co-evolutions of childhood and play, however compromising a child’s ability to pursue his or her spontaneous interests and instead prizing an “overarching educationally led social definition of childhood” (Singh & Gupta, 2011, p. 236).

As the aforementioned discussion suggests, non-Western cultures, such as that of India, are more likely to adhere to traditional parenting styles and practices. In a culture where education is more valued than play, parents often view play as “the opposite to learning” (Jiang, n.d., p. 2). Immigrant groups (e.g., Asian-Americans) tend to hold onto ideas about play and education that closely align with the value systems of their ancestral or natal culture. Ethno-theories about childrearing, play, and early childhood development travel with families as they become immersed in new cultural communities or locales around urban areas (Roopnarine, 2014, p. 4). In fact, originally cultural beliefs about play can be so strong for these immigrant parents that the application of play as a developmental tool may be very hard to accept. To reshape parents’ views or practices so that the parents recognize play as a developmental device is a challenging task, even once
the parents are immersed in different cultural settings. Such a task is complicated by the fact that parents who grow up in low play-facilitation environments, or had fewer play opportunities as children themselves, are more inclined to create similar play environments for their own children (Singer & Singer, 2005).

Both parental and culture beliefs about play appear to influence in how much play is encouraged at home. Culture plays a significant role in shaping parents’ beliefs about play and play practices. Culture also shapes the nature and type of play, as well as parents’ psychological values about childrearing practices, ultimately influencing whether play is encouraged as a developmental tool in the home.

**Theoretical frameworks**

A firm understanding of relevant theories lays the groundwork for independent research in the social sciences. Five sets of interrelated and complimentary theories help the researcher construct the theoretical framework for this study: Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological system theory, Vygotsky’s (1929) sociocultural theory, John W. Berry’s (1990) acculturation theory, Sara Harkness and Charles M. Super’s (1986) developmental niche theory, and Bakhtin’s theory of ideological becoming (1981).

**Ecological system theory**

Urie Bronfenbrenner’s bio ecological model delineates a nested system of multiple interrelated environments and their influence on both the family and the child. This model provides the fundamental framework by which to analyze the relationship between the individual and the environment. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states:
“Development is defined as the person’s evolving conception of the ecological environment, and his relation to it, as well as the person’s growing capacity to discover, sustain, or alter its properties” (p. 9). This theory highlights how a child’s development is influenced not only by factors unique to the child’s family but also the surrounding world (e.g., social, biological, political, and economic conditions). The definition of developmental ecology depends not on a single setting, but rather on several categories of interaction; in other words, “…it accords equal importance to relations between settings and to the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded” (p. 284). In this nested arrangement of concentric structure, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, we might consider as a process with an interpersonal relationship: the microsystem, or the first level that is the child’s immediate surroundings, such as his or her home, parents, and siblings; the mesosystem, or the second level that includes those surrounding outside of the home, such as school and external play settings; the exosystem or the third level that includes the work environment; and finally the macrosystem, or the final level influencing development and which is comprised of social norms.

Along with these four levels, Bronfenbrenner introduces a fifth level: the chronosystem. The chronosystem highlights whether there is change or consistency over the lifetime of a person. Interactions with various settings allow the child to receive messages about his or her own identity and culture. These messages help shape the child’s understanding of self, community, and societal norms (Rogoff, 2003). In conducting this study, Brofenbrenner’s biological model is used in order to understand the changes in Indian mothers’ beliefs about play, as well as to gain insight into the reasoning for the continuities or discontinuities in the mothers’ belief systems.
Acculturation theory

The term “ethnic identity” signifies the specific beliefs, practices, or values that are established as the means of belonging to a definite ethnic group. During the process of acculturation, one’s ethnic identity may be influenced, causing one’s relationship to the culture of origin to be reshaped, modified, or strengthened. To consider the acculturation process as either orthogonal or multidimensional (Berry, 1990) is a fairly new concept. To understand the cross cultural effects, it is also important to understand assimilation theory along with acculturation theory, as both the theories describe cross cultural effects on both minorities as well as majorities in societies that are multi ethnic and multi-cultural in nature. People often consider these two concepts as same and use them interchangeably, even though there is a subtle difference. Assimilation theory was previously considered a linear, one-dimensional model. According to this singular developmental trajectory, an individual’s current identity was taken to be the starting point, and his or her assimilation to the host culture was considered the ending point.

However, Berry’s multidimensional, orthogonal model highlights other possibilities. Berry’s (1990) acculturation model signifies four ways to associate with the dominant culture: to assimilate, identifying exclusively with the dominant culture and severing ties with the native culture; to alienate, rejecting both the dominant and the native cultures; to separate, acknowledging only the native culture and completely rejecting the host culture; or to integrate, becoming bicultural by balancing the attributes of both cultures. In this case, an individual might maintain some beliefs from his or her culture of origin, yet also display some attributes of the dominant culture. Using Berry’s
established patterns as a framework, this study assesses the acculturation strategy of immigrant Indian mothers and their children.

**Developmental niche and parental ethno theories**

Harkness and Super’s (1986) developmental niche theory offers a scaffold with which to understand how culture shapes human development. It can be used as to gain a better understanding of human development in a cultural context. There are three major components, or sub-systems, that shape a child’s life: the physical and social settings of everyday life, the customs and practices of childcare and child rearing, and the psychology of the caretaker. An interactive relationship exists among these three subsystems and it influences the child’s behavior, thoughts, and development in totality. As Harkness and Super (1986) state, “The child is a rapidly changing person, especially in the early years. Language and social skills develop, personal interests emerge, and the child learns to cope with, or avoid, specific features of the niche” (p. 98). Applying the developmental niche model, this study investigates the effects of culture on immigrant Indian mothers’ views and practices of play.

Parental ethno theories describe the cultural beliefs that are expressed in families’ daily lives. These beliefs are typically passed down through the generations, unknowingly becoming part of the family members’ belief systems. Listening to lullabies because it is believed to lead to early literacy or massaging a child with mustard oil because it is believed to provide strength are just two examples of familial beliefs that reflect the surrounding culture. In terms of play, Indian mothers tend to believe in the power of multiplication rhymes or alphabet songs as pathways to early cognitive
development. This is a reflection of the mothers’ individualized ethno theories.

Understanding parents’ ethno theories allows insight into the strategies that parents use to raise their children to become productive members of society. Parental ethno theories emerge from parents’ own childhood learning environments and are influenced by the surrounding culture. The choices parents make in relation to the surrounding culture are apparent in parent-child interactions. Parental ethno theories provide the foundation for their children’s “culturally constructed environment” (Harkness, Super, Moises, Bermudez, Rha, Mavridis, & Zylicz, 2010, p.68). This environment is not random rather; it is a rich tapestry of interpersonal communications, physical circumstances, and philosophies about the world. Understanding the psychology behind immigrant mothers’ views regarding play helps illuminate how the dominant cultural environment guides the development of children, as well as how culturally regulated customs influence the mothers’ views of play.

**Sociocultural theory**

Russian psychologist Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1929) emphasizes the vital connection between the social and psychological worlds of the child. Vygotsky argues that “[c]ulture generally does not produce anything new apart from that which is given by nature. But it transforms nature to suit the ends of man. The same transformation occurs in the cultural development of behavior” (p. 49). Vygotsky’s ideas are based on the relationship between the social experiences governing children’s learning and culture. By recognizing the connections among the mind, culture, and representation, Vygotsky points to how a child acquires his or her cultural tools: language, concepts, and thought.
Interactions between adults and children themselves, are an important part of every child’s cultural inheritance.

The cultural environment plays a very specific role in the development of a child’s personality, his or her consciousness, and his or her relationship with reality (Vygotsky, 1929). In “The Problem of the Cultural Development of the Child,” Vygotsky notes that for a “primitive” child, the environment is the primary source of development. Child development is a complex, dialectical procedure characterized by stages. Vygotsky contends that children are born with biological contains on their mind. Play is not ingrained in the child as part of his or her biological nature, but learning to play within his or her social environment is. The extent to which the child’s physical environment and culture values play has a significant impact on the child’s opportunities to learn through play. Development is an uneven process with different functions, metamorphoses, and qualitative transformations of one form into the others.

As Vygotsky (1929) argues, “the culture cannot be forced on the child from the outside,” instead “it always originates inwardly” (p. 3). Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory is thus a useful tool by which to understand the fundamental role of immigrant Indian mothers’ social interactions, their perspective on and practices of play as a developmental tool for their children, and the effects of the dominant culture on their beliefs about play.

**Ideological becoming**

Young children’s play is a common and innovative topic in the research world, in which alternative paths and innovative thinking are highly acknowledged. One of these creative thinkers is Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, whose
works have largely contributed to the field of educational research since the 1980s.

Today, Bakhtin’s theories are a tool for scholars, as he challenges standard assumptions about the development of the self and the notion of the “ideological becoming.”

In Bakhtinian writings, the “ideological becoming refers to how we develop our way of viewing the world, our system of ideas, what Bakhtin calls an ideological self” (Freedman & Ball, 2004, p. 5). Bakhtin’s (1981) discussion of the ideological becoming is distinguished between two different discourses: authoritative and internally persuasive. The authoritative discourse is official, as it has power in it and “was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse” (p. 342). However, the internally persuasive discourse is unofficial, being considered as self-motivated and flexible. Bakhtin (1981) states that the “internally persuasive word is half-ours and half someone else’s and applied to new material, new conditions in an intense struggle with other internally persuasive discourse” (p. 345). Through this internally persuasive discourse, an individual can appropriate the words of others, reformulate them as needed, and establish the entity’s own voice; a theory which can be applied to children’s play.

Bakhtin (1981) views an individual as a social context, claiming that an individual influences the social world, and vice versa. By developing that social exchanges are most effective when filled with tension and conflict, he shows that social interaction promotes both learning and the discovery of newfound social understanding. Bakhtin (1981) states, “our ideological development is… an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values” (p. 346). In the Bakhtinian point of view, the context, subjects, and ways that implement ideological development are important in the assimilation process. Therefore,
the ideological becoming does not simply attribute to the conception of just one-confined idea, but rather the development of the complex of ideas and concepts that constitute the whole individual.

In alignment and implementation of the theory of the ideological becoming, Cohen (2011) develops that play allows children to develop a better understanding of their social world, which gaining an understanding of self. By engaging in dialogic relations with other players, children appropriate the actions and languages of the authoritative discourses and contextualize the struggle, thus acquiring the power of their identity. Cohen (2015) states that during play, children’s eloquent dialogues with each other are “self-relevant meaning-making and cultural understanding” (p. 218). Children constantly develop an understanding of their social worlds and of the self, as they reenact social roles, voices, and pretend characters during play. Therefore, the languages presented are a combination of their own (“self”) words, as well as the words of their surroundings (“others”). In conjunction with the combination of multiple voices and ideologies the children constitute self, it becomes apparent that “The I hides in the other and in others” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 147). By appropriating others’ words, language, and form of discourses children shape their own identity through their play.

In this proposed study, children are appropriating the words of their immigrant families as well as the words of outer world (e.g. school, peers, teachers etc.), when engaging in play. Especially when regarding a child who is influenced by both the host and the immigrant culture, “Play discourse is something whose nature is social and whose origins often lie in the interpersonal, social, and cultural matrix of which the child is a part. Children’s discourse is appropriated and assimilated by others’ words and voices
As a child of immigrant family becomes submerged into the dominating host culture, tensions are created among the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. Though both allow the child to receive the opportunity to develop the ideologies that will constitute the self, the child is integrating two different cultures in their play habits and practices. As Bakhtin (1981) states, “a variety of alien discourses enter into the struggle for influence within an individual’s consciousness, just as they struggle with one another in the surrounding social reality” (p. 348). As an immigrant mother’s views regarding play has an impact on play routines, a wide path opens up to study the children’s self-construction as a bi-cultural, second generation immigrant children. How this target child’s appropriation and assimilation of cultural rules and meaning encountering by mothers’ point of view in their play, will be one of the main focuses. By using Bakhtin’s notions of the ideological becoming, the way the child is hearing, internalizing, and responding mother’s voice is indicative of how play will be accommodated into their identities, as well as a better understanding of their social significance.

**Culture**

**Immigration and acculturation**

Different immigrant groups in the United States undergo the complex process of acculturation, and during that time, they may adopt or reject the beliefs and behaviors of the host culture. As it is typically difficult to discard native values for new ones, families tend to select, reject, shift, and modify their current values and cultures for new ones. Therefore, during acculturation, ethnic identities may be influenced and, consequently,
may change, re-shape, or modify, or preserve one’s relationship to the culture of origin. Berry (1997) identifies immigrant adjustment as occurring in four different ways: assimilation, or identifying exclusively with the dominant culture and severing ties with their native culture; alienation, or rejecting the dominant and native cultures; separation, or acknowledging only the native culture and completely rejecting host culture; or integrating the host culture, or integrating, or becoming bicultural, with a combination of characteristics of both cultures.

Despite these four categories, Barry and his colleague (Berry, 1990; Berry & Sam, 2006) highlight integration as a psychologically pattern. By separating from the host culture, parents create psychological problems and social adjustment issues for their children. Successes in academics appear significantly curtailed for these children when they are compared to children whose parents have integrated with or assimilated into the dominant culture (Martinez, Degarmo, & Eddy, 2004). For example, Indian mothers often rebuff the idea that play is an important psychological endeavor that fosters growth or knowledge. Considering that idea, as an inadequacy, mothers’ beliefs about play may be remain stable, or they may become more similar to those found in the host culture. Those who are less acculturated will hold social and educational values less associated with their host culture and have stronger senses of their ethnic identities.

A study conducted by Rogoff (2003) shows that human development is a “cultural process,” but that cultural traditions and practices may shift due to different conditions. Geographical repositioning, generational ideal shifts, and the imposition of views from other cultures may cause changes. Traditional Indian parenting practices regarding play may change upon migration, particularly as mothers become more and more immersed in
the host culture. The arguments that this study makes regarding the role of early caretaking and play are influenced by immigration. Through this acculturation process, an individual may experience better social outcomes and less tension between the native and host cultures.

**Culture and its influence**

Culture can be defined as a set of beliefs, practices, rituals, and norms in which members of a group or community participate. According to the Encyclopedia of Social Psychology:

Culture can be generally defined as an interrelated set of values, tools, and practices that are shared among a group of people who possess a common social identity...Cultural world-views affect a range of psychological processes, including perceptual, cognitive, personality, and social processes, but are thought to most strongly influence social psychological processes. (Halloran, 2007, p. 210).

Cultural studies involve interpreting these norms and practices using an interdisciplinary approach. Researchers across fields such as anthropology, sociology, history, psychology, and education have delved into studies of culture with differing perspectives.

Dyson and Genishi (2005) describe how culture influences our everyday lives. Cultural practices are seen as an integral part of daily life and are most easily recognized when one encounters a different way of conducting daily life. Dyson and Genishi note that “[r]esearchers have used the term ‘cultural practices’ to refer to the recurrent kinds of events. The concept of a practice emphasizes the ways in which everyday events come
packed with values about what is natural, mature, morally right, or aesthetically pleasing” (p. 7). More precisely, as people from a certain culture become acclimated to their surroundings, they are acculturated into what is both unique and normal about their daily lives. The customary cultural practices are passed down generationally and are not generally seen as strange, backward, or harmful, unless examined from an outsider’s perspective. Cultural traditions promote certain childrearing practices, interpretations, and outlooks; more specifically, they “can influence parenting through the influence of family structure, residency patterns, childrearing practices, and beliefs and attitudes about the roles of children at different ages and stages” (Coll & Pachter, 2002, p. 6).

Parental practices may blend or converge when individuals experience different cultures, or undergo the process of acculturation. A classic definition of acculturation, provided by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), is that acculturation follows “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149). In harmony with the original idea, acculturation can be considered a change in the culture of a group. Yet today it can also be seen as an in the psychology of an individual (Berry & Sam, 2006). By underscoring the uniqueness of the sets of cultural variables that influence the individual and the psychological outcomes they produce, it become easier to perceive the relationship as an in-between cultural variables and parents’ psychology.

Harkness et al. (2010) describe how parents structure their child childrearing practices around cultural models. Parental ethno theories help researchers understand how parents in a specific culture explain their practices, a meaning-making process that
ties into broader cultural understanding. Based on their study of caregivers’ beliefs and parent-child interactions, Harkness and Super have constructed their development niche theory. The developmental niche theory suggests that physical and social settings provide places and people that constitute the child’s learning environment; customs and practices of care offer opportunities to acquire various competencies, from reading to self-regulation, from playing baseball to caring for an infant sibling; and the psychology of caretakers, particularly the parental ethno-theories regarding the child and his or her development, shape the choices that parents make in relation to the settings that their children inhabit and the competencies they acquire (p. 68).

The developmental niche theory helps to guide our understanding of human growth. Parents’ views on the meaning of play for children’s learning and progress vary remarkably across cultures and, consequently, many variables are considered to affect play (Roopnarine, 2011). Various levels of importance may be attributed to children’s play. Parents may believe that there is a strong connection between play and learning, thus encouraging play; on the other hand, they may not see any developmental benefit at all. In a study done by Jin and Roopnarine (2012), it was found that parental’ beliefs about play shift according to ethnic identity and cultural variation. While play can be considered a natural part of childhood, not all mothers recognize play’s developmental benefits, instead seeing it merely as recreation. Some mothers, however, emphasize play’s role not only in children’s physical and social, development but also in children’s cognitive development. Cote and Bornstein (2005) believe that “regularities within settings, customs, and cultural belief systems organize children’s experiences and provide
the information from which children and their parents co-construct the rules of their culture” (p. 479).

In India, parents are generally an integral part of their child’s early educational experiences. Parents tend to rebuff the idea that play is an important psychological activity that goes hand in hand with children’s development and learning. The strong traditional cultural belief is that it is the parents’ primary responsibility to encourage their children’s academic success. Instead of allowing their children to play, parents push for early academic exposure, which they believe leads to cognitive development. Because education, not play, is considered the pathway to success, children are taught that good grades and a strong work ethic are the keys to success. This means that there is significant parental involvement in the children’s lives. As Parmer, Harkness, and Super (2004) state, “Asian parents stress the idea that getting a head start in early academics is important for the cognitive development of children in the preschool years” (p. 102). Yet the development niche model suggests that Indian mothers’ ethnic beliefs can be modified, and perhaps fully changed, through exposure to the culturally regulated customs of a host culture.

**Method**

**Case study**

The case study is a well-established approach to qualitative research that facilitates the analysis of a phenomenon or event within a given context through the use of a variety of data sources. It is particularly known for assisting the researcher in uncovering the answers to “how” and “why” types of questions. According to Baxter and
Jack (2008), the case study approach helps the researcher to find out “how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated” (p. 558). It also helps the researcher better understand the process or dynamics of a set of practices. Stake (1994) defines the case study not as “a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 435). He also views the case study as an attentive inquiry regarding a specific event with two components: “a process (the process of creating the final report) of inquiry about the case and the product (a case record) of that inquiry” (p. 436).

According to Stake (1994) there are three types of case studies: an intrinsic case study, or that which focuses on a unique situation and produces results with limited transferability; an instrumental case study, or that which facilitates insight into a specific phenomenon; and a collective case study, or that in which there is more than one case that is being assessed.

In contrast to Stake, Yin (2003) categorizes case studies as either explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. An explanatory case study explains a real-life situation that is too complex to be investigated using survey-based or experimental strategies, while an exploratory case study investigates situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes. Finally, a descriptive case study, describes an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it appears.

Case-study research encourages the use of multiple data sources to enhance the trustworthiness of the data (Yin, 2003). In this way, “[each] data source is one piece of the ‘puzzle,’ with each piece contributing to the researcher’s understanding of the whole phenomenon” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). By using several of data sources, the phenomenon can be clearly understood from different angles, rendering the topic of
interest well examined.

This study draws on the descriptive case-study research design. It uses intake questionnaires, drawing tasks, interviews, and informal observations as data sources. It also employs the stimulated recall strategy, using photographs of the target children at play at different ages (i.e. infancy, toddlerhood, preschool, and primary grades), with all these data sources will help to better understand the unique situation of the cases. The study formally tracks the views of play held by three mothers who were born and raised in India and are currently living in the United States as immigrants. The case study aims to find out if the mothers’ beliefs about their children’s play practices have changed since immigrating.
Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to review the methodology of this study. This chapter is organized into the following sections: (1) Preparing for the study; (2) Background information about interest in the topic; (3) Participants; (4) Location/Setting; (5) Methodology; (6) Data generation; (7) Data coding and analysis.

Preparing for the study

Prior to the onset of data collection, the researcher acknowledges her exempt status as granted by the Institutional Review Board. Before beginning the actual study, the researcher performed a pilot study in order to identify any potential difficulties. A consent form was distributed to and signed by the mothers during the first visit (see Appendix A). During the first visit, the researcher also explained the mothers about the nature of the study, the roles and expectations (of both the researcher and the participants), and the process by which the participants’ privacy will be protected.

Background information about interest in the topic

Caring for my daughter as an immigrant mother in a host culture has greatly impacted my views regarding play. Since emigrating from India, I have found that I have acculturated to the dominant American culture, adopting a bicultural point of view. My exposure to American culture has influenced my attitudes and beliefs regarding play; yet I remain committed to some of the principles of the focus on academic success of my
daughter’s childhood. I am eager to consider the experiences of other mothers who are also raising their children in a host culture. Though culture is not so neutral it is interesting to consider if, and how, the mothers are able to mediate between the two cultures they experience. As a researcher, my interest in this topic has been further stoked by considering the methods by which mothers raise their children. Because of my heritage, I have a special interest in examining Indian immigrant mothers who have settled and begun families in the United States. As their children become further immersed in the social culture of the United States, mothers gain greater exposure to the morals and philosophies foreign to them. Whether the mothers’ traditional Indian beliefs about play ultimately diverge or converge with those of the new host culture is the focus of this study.

**Participants**

The participants that had been chosen for this study are three immigrant Indian mothers. The participants are described in detail below.

All three mothers were born and raised in India and later immigrated to the United States, where they gave birth to their children. The mothers and their children currently reside in New Jersey. One of the three mothers is the researcher’s second cousin’s friend, whom the researcher met at a cultural event in New Jersey a year ago. With the help of this mother, the researcher met two additional Indian mothers and their families. This took place within two months from the initial meeting at a Bengali holiday celebration, Durga Puja, in New Jersey. All three mothers have a child attending fourth grade (9-10 years old) and older children of the same age as each other.
The lengths of the participant mothers’ residence in the USA are 19, 20, and 24 years, and the mothers’ ages are 46, 47, and 48 years old. All three participant mothers holding either doctoral or master degrees.

After listening to a brief description of the researcher’s study, the three mothers all agreed to participate. Upon receiving the IRB approval, the researcher personally and separately visited each of the participants. During the researcher’s first visit in October of 2015, all participants signed the consent form and showed their excitement for this research to begin. The researcher had begun the interview sessions during February of 2016, with each family received three visits in total for interview based data-collection purposes.

The target children also participated in this study. By including the children, the researcher gained a better understanding of the impact of any perceived changes in the mothers’ beliefs about play.

**Location/ Setting**

The study was conducted in New Jersey, where out of the 89% of households that are comprised of married couples, 29% are Indian (U. S. Census, 2004). According to the Migration Policy Institute’s (MPI), there are 1,869,000 immigrants living in the state of New Jersey, of which 216,000 immigrants are from India (Zong & Batalova, 2015). The large Indian-American population, in New Jersey has made it possible for the researcher to locate potential participants. The researcher has also selected this state for its proximity to Pennsylvania, as this make it easier for the researcher to interview the participants in their homes.
Methodology

The case-study methodology was employed in order to produce a qualitative analysis. To provide an in-depth understanding, multiple data sources were used during the study. More specifically, the study utilized: (1) an intake demographic and personal information questionnaire; (2) a warm-up drawing task; (3) three interviews with photographs of the target children at play at different ages (i.e. infancy, toddlerhood, preschool, and the primary grades); (4) informal observations (with field notes) of play, play spaces and materials during each of the three planned home visits for interviews, on a weekday, and weekend for several hours; (5) telephone calls for spot-checking; and (6) the mothers’ weeklong diaries of the target children’s play activities. The interviews ranged 60 – 90 minutes, at each mother’s discretion and 30-35 minutes, at each target child’s preferences. Each interview was conducted at the interviewee’s home by the researcher.

In line with the well-established research protocols, the researcher informed the participants about the details of the study and provided confirmation, in writing, that their responses would be kept confidential and their anonymity would be preserved. The researcher also assured the mothers that she would be certain to keep the data secure.

The participants signed their consent forms in October 23 and 26, 2015. The researcher thus began the study by distributing and collecting assent forms (since the target children were also participating in this study). During the first step of data collection, the researcher provided intake questionnaires to the parents. After collecting the questionnaire, the participants were asked to complete an initial drawing task that included two steps: drawing and discussion. Semi-structured open-ended interviews were
one of the final steps in this data-collection process, with the photographs of the target
cchildren playing used as part of the study’s stimulated recall strategy.

This study conducted interview sessions with each mother three times and each
target child for one time. Session one highlighted each mother’s overall view of play. The
questions that were asked focused on the given mothers’ memories of play, the effects of
parental ethno theories related to play, and the mother’s beliefs about play and its
benefits.

Session two was focused on the targeted child’s, as well as the father’s, peers’,
and friends’, effects on the given mothers’ ethno-theories related to play. The researcher
interviewed the mother in a separate room. By conducting this self-regulated interview,
the researcher helped to ensure that the mother’s responses was not be influenced by
anything, thereby maintaining the legitimacy of the data. This also helped each
interviewee to feel more comfortable with answering spontaneously.

Session three was concentrated on whether the given mother’s ethno-theories
pertaining to play had shifted due to the effects of her older child. The interview also
explored whether the target child had had a significant influence on the mother’s beliefs
and how those beliefs had changed over time. The researcher conducted an informal
interview with the target child. Before beginning the interview, the researcher made sure
the target child was certain about participating in this study. The child’s mother was
asked questions during each of the three-interview sessions, while the target child was
asked questions during only one interview session.

To prompt stimulating interviews, the researcher used photographs of the target
children at play at different ages. The photographs were used to provoke “stimulated
recall.” The mothers were asked to recall the memories captured in the photos and describe their thoughts. Pictures of the children at different ages helped facilitate this reflection. Additionally, the researcher made a few informal observations via field notes, telephone calls for spot-checking, and the mothers’ a week-long diaries of the target children’s play activities. This helped the researcher to better understand play settings and practices in the participants’ home environments. A detailed description of the data collection process is given in the section that follows.

Data generation

The data-generation procedure entailed a number of steps. In line with IRB standards, the researcher provided written details about the study to the participants and obtained their signed consent to participate the study (see Appendix A). Upon beginning the study, the mothers signed permission and assent forms for their children (see Appendix B). After signing the forms, the mothers were asked to answer the intake questionnaire (see Appendix C). The mothers completed the questionnaire independently, providing socio-demographic data, their ethnic identification, and general background information. The researcher gave the mothers about 20-25 minutes to complete the questionnaire; she then introduced a drawing task (see Appendix D). The study was conducted using the semi-structured in-depth interview format in order to explore key themes (see Appendices E, F, and G). This meant that the interviewees were given the freedom to diverge from the study’s pre-scripted questions and share information more spontaneously. Throughout the study, whenever the opportunity happened the researcher
observed the children’s play environments and play practices in the home. As soon as possible after the home visit, the researcher made field notes in various categories (see Appendix H). The study also used the mothers’ weeklong diaries of the target children’s play activities (see Appendix I) and telephone calls for spot-checking (see Appendix J) the children’s activities.

**Drawing task**

The drawing task was used as a warm-up activity in order to develop a comfortable environment and to establish a rapport with the mothers. During the task, the mothers revisited their experiences regarding play. This provided the researcher with a helpful introduction to the mothers’ understanding of the two different cultures and play.

The drawing task included two stages. During the first stage, the researcher provided the drawing instructions, paper, and either a pencil or pen as the drawing instrument. Then, the mothers drew their own childhood memories of play, as well as their memories of their children’s play, at two different time periods: 0-5 (infancy and toddlerhood) and 5-10 (preschool and primary school). The drawings were allowed the mothers to recollect their memories of play during their infancy, toddlerhood, pre-school years, and primary-school years.

In the second stage of the task, the researcher conducted semi-structured open-ended interviews with the mothers about their drawings. The mothers described what they had drawn, including what they imagined that they and their children were playing during the different life stages as well as the similarities and differences between their
play experiences and their children’s experiences (see Appendix D, Figure 3, Figure 14, and Figure 27).

**Stimulated recall**

This study used “stimulated recall” (SR) as a flexible research tool. Stimulated recall is a “way of being close to the process of working on the task without interfering with the process itself” (Hamburg & Hamburg, 2003). This technique was a useful tool for encouraging reflection from the participants. With this method, the researcher was able to show the participants different settings with the intention of facilitating recall and reflection (Dewitt, 2008).

Photos of play featuring the target children, as well as the mothers, were used as aids for stimulated recall in order to reinforce the mothers’ memories. The photos helped to scaffold the mothers’ memories, maintain connections with the participants’ experiences, and build clearer understandings of play at different ages. This interactive method allowed the mothers to explain their feelings about the photos; it also elicited memories during the interview, thereby encouraging the mothers’ deeper engagement. Using the pictures as prompts helped the participants to recall their memories more effectively and therefore enabled the researcher to gain deeper insight into the meaning of play. As Lyle (2003) specified, this method “reinforces the need for consonance between the methods employed and the focus of the study” (p. 873). Though the study design used stimulated recall as a “talk you through it” approach, the approach did not have any limitations; rather, it prompted the mothers towards further reflection.
Interviews

There are certain things we cannot directly observe, such as people’s feelings, motives, and thoughts. We cannot be witnesses to events that took places in the past, either. As Patton (1990) explains:

We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer.

We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective. (p. 1960).

Interviewing is a very useful tool and is widely accepted by qualitative researchers (Fontana & Frey, 2005). It was thus the primary method for this study.

An interview can be defined as a “conversation with a purpose,” as it helps a researcher explore what is “in and on someone else’s mind” (Webb & Webb, as quoted in Burgess, 1982, p. 107). The central purpose of a research interview is to gather information by exploring the views, beliefs, experiences, and motivations of an individual on a given matter. More specifically, as Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008) state, “Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a ‘deeper’ understanding of a social phenomenon than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires” (p. 291). The reason for conducting interviews is to help the researcher learn about the participants through the specified answers that are contextualized by the interviewees. As Seidman (2006) expresses, “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning that they make of that experience” (p. 9).
In this study, the primary reason for conducting interviews was to get to know the interviewees more personally. As Seidman (2006) argues, “Interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior” (p.10). Thus, by holding a one-on-one interview with each mother, the researcher aimed to better understand each participant’s views and practices of children’s play.

When research is conducted using through a planned interviewing format in order to test a primary hypothesis, the questions and analysis are standardized. Similarly, the objective of some researchers is to discover meaning in order to improve upon a particular point of view and thus generate a new hypothesis. Qualitative research, however, is conducted in order to blend theoretical and conceptual knowledge with real-life experiences, as elicited by the interviewer and described by the interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Of course, it is important for the interviewer to not only elicit descriptions of the interviewees’ lives, but also to gain accounts of how and why their lives are as they have described.

There are varied interview arrangements, and they go by different names. There are three principal qualitative interview formats: the unstructured interview, which is free-flowing and flexible; the semi-structured interview, in which the interviewer plans question to ask but asks them in no particular order; and the structured interview, in which the interviewer follows a strict protocol. It is generally agreed that structured interviews tend to produce quantitative data. Therefore, qualitative researchers usually favor unstructured and semi-structured interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) consider how researchers select key
informants “for their knowledge and role in a setting and their willingness and ability to serve as translators, teachers, mentors and/or commentators for the researcher” (p. 19).

Interviewers extract information on the basis of observed behaviors, interactions, artifacts, and rituals, allowing further questions to arise in the process. The unstructured interview is formulated alongside the collection of observational data; the semi-structured interview is “often the sole data source for a qualitative research project” (p. 21). The semi-structured in-depth interview is a widely used interviewing format within qualitative research. Generally speaking, semi-structured interviews are scheduled events with either individuals or groups. Researchers usually use open-ended questions while simultaneously incorporating other questions generated from the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee.

In using the semi-structured in-depth interview format, the researcher must delineate a particular concern to be explored using key questions. The interviewee still has the freedom to discourse more generally, however (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chandwick, 2008). With the semi-structured interview, the interviewee can disclose thoughts and feelings that are generally private in nature. For this reason, it is important that the interviewer have good interpersonal skills and the ability to establish a relationship with the interviewee. This valuable and ethically sensitive quality necessitates respect on the part of the interviewer, which gives rise to a sense of trust on the part of the interviewee. Clearly, the interviewer’s professionalism is very important to the success of this method, given the need to establish such a relationship and protect the information gathered during the interview.

The qualitative interview constitutes a tool whereby the researcher attempts to
gain in-depth information about an individual’s experiences by eliciting his or her stories (Seidman, 2006). However, to say that the format simply entails asking questions and recording answers is insufficient. The interview requires preliminary efforts on the part of the interviewer to build a relationship with the interviewee. It subsequently requires the interviewer to probe, and guide the interviewee while confirming and completing the answers that are given. It ends with the interviewer analyzing, interpreting, and sharing the findings of the interview. In regards to this process, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) specify, “Knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview is literally an inter view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (p. 2).

This study conducted interviews in three phases (Seidman, 2006). The researcher interviewed the three participant-mothers and the three target children separately. Though the mothers were interviewed during each of the three phrases, and the target children were interviewed just once.

By interviewing the target children, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the collected data. At the very beginning of the interviews with the children, the researcher established a friendly environment. For example, the researcher introduced herself to each child using the child’s favorite game. She also tried to engage the child in a friendly conversation. Later, the researcher used the game in order to encourage the child to talk.

This study used the semi-structured, in-depth interview format in order to explore key open-ended questions (see Appendices E, F, and G). The researcher also allowed the interviewees the freedom to diverge from these questions and offer information that they
regarded as important to the questions. The researcher believed that it was important to pay attention to details, and to gather and carefully consider new data through the processes of interpretation and analysis.

All interviews were conducted at the participants’ homes and took place over three separate occasions per participant. The researcher visited the interviewees on the weekend since the mothers were working professionals who commute to their places of employment daily. The researcher preferred to keep continuity with the interviews, and therefore visited the interviewees in the month of March and April, mostly during the weekends and few weekdays. During these visits, the researcher built relationships with the participants. The direct contact and personal engagement with the mothers allowed the researcher to maximize the richness of the qualitative measures.

The researcher audio-recorded the interviews with the consent of the mothers and children. All three sets of interviews were conducted in the participants’ homes and via telephone. As the mothers were fluent in English, the interviews were slated to be conducted in English, but they were ultimately conducted in the participants’ native language, Bengali. As mentioned earlier, the researcher and the participant-mothers all spoke the same language and therefore, the participant-mothers felt comfortable giving their interviews in Bengali. Later all these interviews transcribed in English by the researcher. Interview one lasted as follows: participant mother #1 for 65 minutes, participant mother #2 for 61 minutes, and participant mother #3 for 60 minutes. Interview two lasted as follows: participant mother #1 for 75 minutes, participant mother #2 for 70 minutes, and participant mother #3 for 77 minutes. Third interview lasted as follows: participant mother #1 for 90 minutes, participant mother #2 for 81 minutes, and
participant mother #3 for 83 minutes. The interviews for the target children are as follows: target child #1 for 35 minutes, target child #2 for 32 minutes, and target child #3 for 30 minutes. The researcher transcribed the recordings shortly upon completion of each interview and added notes to help explain and summarize the interviews as well.

The interviews were conducted over a period of time. As mentioned earlier, the participants were working parents, thus making it necessary to conduct most of the interviews on the weekends. Usually two families were studied each week. A standard open-ended interview was conducted, asking each participant to answer the same set of questions. This helped to ensure a complete data set as a basis for making assessments among the responses.

Observation

The researcher designed a few informal observations for each participant. The observations were conducted five times in total for each participant; during each of the three planned home visits for interviews, on a weekday, and on a weekend for several hours. In describing the child’s the play area, the researcher considered whether the play setting was in the child’s bedroom, a designated playroom, the living room, or the dining area. If the child did not have a specific area in which to play, play was categorized as spontaneous. The types of toys the child normally played with, and the overall play environment in and outside of the house, were also observed. During and after the observations the researcher recorded field notes in each category (see Appendix H). The researcher later asked and discussed with the mothers the recreational and educational play practices of the target child, based on the field notes and the provided photos. Such
informal observations provided accurate and candid portraits of the target children’s play settings, areas, and practices. To gain a better understanding of the mothers’ encouragement of their children’s play, these observations were followed by discussion.

**Telephone calls for spot-checking**

This study organized telephone calls for spot-checking the children’s activities. Telephone calls were conducted with each household at about 7:45 pm on Mondays and Fridays for 7-10 minutes over two weeks. During the phone calls, the researcher asked the mothers about the children’s activities. Each mother was asked the same questions (see Appendix J).

**Daily weeklong diary**

The participant-mothers were asked to complete weeklong diaries provided by the researcher. In these diaries, the participant-mothers recorded the target-children’s activities throughout the week, for a total of seven days. The researcher provided the specific times of day at which the mothers were to record the activities. The diary was sent to the mothers electronically. The mothers filled in the diaries’ designated time slots and, upon completion, sent the diaries back to the researcher (see Appendix J).

**Data coding and analysis**

Data analysis followed the data-collection period and involved sorting and coding the data by themes. The responses for each of the qualitative data-collection methods
used in this study were analyzed inductively (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell, 2008).

The following steps were taken:

1. Preparation of raw data files/data cleaning
2. Close reading of text
3. Creation of categories
4. Overlapping coded and un-coded text
5. Continuing revision and refinement of the category system.

Creswell (2008) stated that coding is the process of making sense out of the data but there are no sets of guidelines to follow. As Creswell argues, “[T]o make sense of out of text data; divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes” (p.251). This inductive process of categorizing data requires that the researcher be selective, discarding the data that does not provide evidence of the desired themes (p.251).

After the text was prepared, the researcher read the raw text in detail in order to better understand the content and themes; she then created categories based on these themes. At this stage, common themes were identified according to general categories. After multiple readings of the raw data, however, the researcher was able to adopt more specific classifications using vivo coding. During this inductive coding process, the researcher preserved the actual phrases and meanings of specific text segments.

The researcher used the traditional hand-coding method of inductive coding. Some aids (e.g., highlighters, different colors of sticky notes) facilitated the coding procedure. During the coding procedure, the researcher divided the data sources into four categories: (1) the open-ended questionnaire, (2) the drawing task and one-on-one
interviews, (3) the researcher’s observation notes, and (4) the daily weeklong and telephone calls for spot-checking. Each of the four categories was coded separately. The first and second categories mainly helped to reveal the mothers’ perceptions of play. After performing inductive coding, five main themes emerged: (1) the mothers’ own childhood play memories and views of children’s play, (2) the target children’s play activities and the mother’s engagement in their children’s play, (3) the ways the mothers expressed their changed perceptions of play, (4) the factors that helped the mothers to change their perceptions of play, and (5) the mothers’ childrearing goals. Each theme included additional embedded subthemes.

The third (the researcher’s observation notes) and fourth (the daily weeklong diary and telephone calls for spot-checking) categories focused on the mothers’ considerations and actual practices of play in their children’s everyday lives. Three main themes again emerged after the inductive coding procedure: (1) the target children’s play activities that the participant-mothers considered to be play, (2) the target children’s activities over time, as described by their mothers, and (3) the ways the mothers expressed their changed perceptions of play. Through this inductive process of categorizing raw data into a few meaningful themes, the researcher was able to select specific data to use and to disregard other data that did not specifically provide evidence for the research themes (Creswell, 2008). Table 1 provides an example of the summary of coding data.
Table 1: Summary of Coding Data

Understanding immigrant mothers’ perceptions of play

(An example of coding the data from the open-ended questionnaire, drawing task and one-on-one interviews, the researcher’s observation notes, and the daily weeklong diary for a week and telephone calls for spot-checking)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Themes</th>
<th>Emerging Subthemes</th>
<th>Initial Latent Themes</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ own childhood play memories and views of children’s play</td>
<td>- Played with</td>
<td>Dolls, kitchen utensils, drawing, reading, pretend play, educational games: with rhymes, addition and subtraction with grandparents, studying was the priority, not play, Finish study first then play, on the weekends or summer time with friends</td>
<td>Open-ended questionnaire, drawing task, and one-on-one interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- In her early age</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Played mostly</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Priority</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Cannot remember/remember</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Had to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Played only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Target children’s play activities and the mothers’ engagement in their children’s play</td>
<td>- played with</td>
<td>Doll, stuffed animals, cars, blocks, electronic games, pretend play, drawing, reading dress up, coloring, yes, friends, older sibling, puzzles, reading, mother-daughter drawing board games, swimming, bike riding tennis, flash cards, creative writing, drawing, Legos, pretend play music, making movies, dancing, acting</td>
<td>Drawing task, and one-on-one interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- parents play</td>
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<td>- play with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- electronics games,</td>
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<td>Observations</td>
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<td>- family games</td>
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<td>- favorite activities</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- enjoys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How the mothers expressed their changed perceptions of play</td>
<td>-likes -wants -encourages</td>
<td>to teach her through play, him to play, Play but researches first and then let him play. Monitor the play. To arrange a play date with conscientiousness. Encouraging her child to join in school sports and different games. Appreciates playful early childhood.</td>
<td>One-on-one interviews Observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Finds time to play -Take initiative family plays -Practicing</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>What helped the mothers to change their perceptions of play</th>
<th>-Location -Resources -Family</th>
<th>This country. Flexibility of teaching and learning with play, encouraging society, supportive community, inspiring environment. Introduced by older son, husband is supportive and engaged with these different ideas. Independence</th>
<th>One-on-one interviews</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Mothers’ childrearing goals.</th>
<th>-Priority - Secure -Teach and -Supporting play -To become</th>
<th>Education, Future with education, work hard, practice and learn. Try to assist and encourage her but before that, will find out the benefit of that play. A global citizen, a good</th>
<th>One-on-one interviews</th>
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Validity

Content validity

Content validity was addressed by pilot study. The pilot study helped the researcher identify and assess any difficulties in the content areas, methods, and interview questions before the main study began.

Data triangulation

Data triangulation involves using multiple data-collection methods to gain a holistic grasp on the phenomenon being studied (Glesne, 2011). The researcher explored various data sources to see if the phenomenon, or the case investigated, appeared to be consistent. Multiple data-collection sources, such as drawings, questionnaires, observations, telephone calls for spot-checking, weeklong diaries, and interviews, helped to validate the findings of this study. All of these sources helped to create a truer construction of immigrant Indian mothers’ realities. The purpose of triangulation was not necessarily to cross-validate data, but rather to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon.
Introducing participant-mother #1 (age: 47)

Participant-mother #1 was born and raised in India. After finishing college in India, she came to the U.S. as a wealthy graduate student. She pursued her Ph.D., in the U.S. on a full scholarship. Her husband came to the U.S. before she did; he was also a Ph.D. student with a full scholarship from a prestigious engineering college in India. He established himself as a professional in the U.S. The couple had been living in the U.S. for 24 years when the researcher met them. They were well-established in New Jersey with their two children: a boy, age 14, and a girl, age 9. The 9-years-old girl is the target child in this study. As children, both the mother and the father had experienced strict instruction: this was considered essential in order to achieve their goals, to compete with others in India, and to establish themselves as professionals in the U.S.

Study was our only chores in the childhood…all other things were secondary. That does not mean that we did not play at all. After finishing the homework…(pause), actually you know, after study if I had time I used to get to read story book or used to draw…playing with friends mostly happened during the summer or vacation times or maybe on the weekends

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

Initial conversations with participant-mother #1, as well as the mother’s intake questionnaire, suggested that the mother felt that to establish her career in a foreign country, she and her family, like other Indian middle-class families, had had to endure
lots of hard work, competitive exams, and interviews. She and her husband had known from an early age that they had to study hard to achieve their goals. Their parents had valued education much more than they did play. That meant that when the parents had been children, to “study hard was not the option or choice, it was there like a daily practice and play after that,” the mother recalled.

You know, the only regular and dense practice since my childhood I remember the study, we did not have designated time to play… it is so competitive in India (pause)…to compete with others you have to really work hard…as I am remembering my childhood.

…maybe sometimes on Sunday we played, but not in a regular basis. Actually all (our playtime) was related how much homework we had; from school as well as from our parents

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

This chapter presents the case in terms of the following categories:

a) Mother’s own childhood play memories
b) Target child’s play activities and mother’s engagement in her child’s play
c) Mother’s childrearing goals
d) Target child’s activities that the participant mother considers to be play
e) Observations of and interview with the target child
f) Notes from the weeklong diary about the target child’s play
g) The target child’s activities over time, as described by her mother
h) Mother’s perceptions of her changing views of play
Mother’s own childhood play memories

Participant-mother #1 started the drawing task with a big smile. During the conversation, she recalled her childhood memories of play both with her friends and by herself. As a child, she enjoyed playing mostly outdoors with her friends.

I grew up in an open place, with trees and open fields. Actually our house was in a small community, in a colony. More likely it was a suburb area. We used to go out to play hopscotch, marbles, and hide and seek and run around in open places with friends…but not in a regular basis…

Particularly during the summer time we used to have one-month vacation from school. It was so much fun! After finishing our homework and handwriting I used to go out and play… before it (the weather) turn out to be too hot. We used to climb the trees or tag or played kit-kit (hopscotch).

Sometimes we used to steal fruits from neighbor’s tree as a big group; we used to gather in our favorite spot and made the plan to steal fruits from a specific house and then persuade the plan. Now as a mother I feel bad! I should not have done that….

I used to play with my brother and his friends, too. We used to play as a big group; flying kite, Pittu (two teams, seven stones, a ball and target) kind of tag game with few stones; in India we called those stones “gutti,”” you know that! I remember playing Guli (looks like marble; actually they are rounded green glass balls, strike and play) as well; these are the designated boys’ game in India, you know and I have played all of them with my brother and his friends…

Summer vacation meant just fun and play…I used to look forward to that.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)
While drawing, the mother remembered her childhood patterns of play. She loved to play during her childhood with friends. Play was limited to Sundays, but it mostly took place during the summertime, when the students were off for summer vacation. On regular school days, the mother felt she did not have enough time to play. After finishing her homework, if she had time, she used to play by herself.

(With a smile) It’s been a long time…(Short pause)…Here I wanted to draw dolls; I used to play with dolls a lot. I also did play with kitchen’s small staff; I used dry sticks, leaves, grasses, and small tree branches as my cooking ingredients and utensils. Here I drew (as she pointed her drawing) my few more childhood games; Ludoo game, hide and seek, jump ropes.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

Participant mother #1 continued talking as she continued drawing, recalling her memories (see Figure 1). She said that the drawing task was transporting her to the past, to her childhood, where she was playing with dolls, running around, and climbing the trees with her friends during the summertime. She was reading different kinds of storybooks and drawing as she wished. The mother had a joyful expression on her face as she drew her childhood memories on the paper (see Figure 1).

My mother was a stay home mom, so she was there all the time.

We used to talk a lot; about school, friends, birds… you know when a little girl talk and mother had to listen every single thing …we sang, we recite, like that… these were my play at home with my mom.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)
Figure 1: Drawing task; participant-mother #1 (03/19/16)
While the researcher and the mother were talking, the target child #1 came and sat next to her mother. After a few moments, the child moved to the floor with her notebook and charcoal pencils and started to “play,” drawing/writing (participant-mother #1 defines drawing/writing is play for her daughter). She continued her “play activities” the whole time. Later the researcher found out that the child had written a story about an ant and a flea. The plot of the story centered on the new student Flea’s arrival in a “huge” school and the Ant’s assistance in making Flea’s adjustment comfortable. During the following visit, the researcher found out from the mother that a little girl from Saudi Arabia had arrived in the target child’s class the week that the child had written the story of Flea and Ant (see Figure 2).

She mentioned me about the new girl in her class and how the other classmates reacting with her.

She also mentioned about the shyness of the new comer’s in the classroom and her language barriers…all of these stories and her feelings about the new girl.
Figure 2: A few pages from the target child #1’s *The Adventures of Ant and Flea*
The mother considered reading one of her childhood play activities. The mother still enjoyed reading as an adult. During the interview, the researcher asked the mother for more details about whether she considered reading to be play. The mother replied:

Well, play gives you pleasure, right! When you read a book, which brings you joy in your mind, too, and you feel happy. I consider it is an exercise of mind.

When children play, they are engaging their mind and body through play, but when children read, they engaged their brain only. Therefore, brain gets active and exercises a lot during the reading time and give children pleasure, like play. Basically through reading instead of physical activity you are doing mental activity, you know the intellectuality

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

The mother recalled that she had developed this play habit of reading with her brother, since he was one of her main playmates during her childhood.

The researcher observed the interior decoration of the house. The house was bedecked with the mother’s own paintings, and sketches, as well as the target child’s drawings and crafts. There is a whole section of the living room as well as other small sections of the house with shelves laden with different kind of books. Underneath coffee tables and in baskets on the sides of the sitting areas were different kinds of magazines. Looking at the interior decoration of the house, it was obvious that the family enjoyed reading.

During the subsequent observation days and the target child’s interview phase, the researcher noticed built-in shelves with books in the libraries, as well as in their bedrooms. This suggests that the family truly engaged with reading.
Target child’s play activities and mother’s engagement in her child’s play

The mother started to recall her daughter’s childhood play habits as the researcher asked about the bottom section of the mother’s drawing, where she had drawn the target child’s play activities.

She used to play as a baby with dolls and toy animals. Slowly she was introduced in blocks and loved it.

Our daughter always loves to draw…actually as a young child she did spend time with drawing rather playing with dolls or other things. Truly, since she was a little girl she loves to draw.

Here, I have to specify that…not coloring; she preferred to draw her own picture, her own story… Nowadays drawing is one of her most favorite activity with writing

(Participant mother #1, 03/19/16)

This participant-mother could not remember whether her own mother or father used to play with her. However, she remembered distinctly that her parents monitored her study everyday with lots of support and encouragements. When she became a mother, she found that she preferred to play with her child. She had been actively engaged with her daughter in different kinds of play since her daughter was young. The mother had a busy professional life, and therefore fitting in playtime could be difficult for her, but she tried to do her best to play with her child and make sure that she reads to the child every day. The mother and the child also loved to draw together from time to time, especially when
they entailed reading stories to her children at night. She considered board games, puzzles, and books, whether done together or separately, her family’s play.

As a family play, we play board games and puzzles. We have been playing board games with our kids since they were little. As I mentioned before, reading is play to me; we read lots of book as well, I drew it here (points to the drawing).

Sometimes it became our family reading day! We read and read and relax and enjoy our time as a whole family. We all go to their tree house and read, depends on the weather of course.

(Participant mother #1, 03/19/16)

As she described her drawing, she returned to her childhood memories and started to associate them with her daughter’s childhood, perhaps trying to determine whether there were any similarities or differences.

You know, we never played with block when we were young. We never had those fancy things or toys. We made blocks out of stones and stack them, made roofs out of leaves and branches, used stone chips or collected sand from the street and used them to build things. It was so much fun! Wonderful memory! You helped me to bring my childhood memory back…(pause)

…you know with our conversation it feels like I am in my childhood…so funny! I can see so clearly how I was so excited when we used to build anything…

But our daughter will not get those experiences, neither our son. Now, we, as their parents, guide their play. We choose and buy games for them so they can play.

(Participant mother #1, 03/19/16)

She also mentioned during the drawing task that the target child had enjoyed drawing since she was little. The child continued to spend her free time with drawing. The mother
said that she never imposed drawing on the child; rather, the mother believed it came very naturally to the child. The mother supported the child’s drawing habits in different ways, such as by providing various textured papers and colors, or by drawing with her. The mother believed this helped the child to be more creative and imaginative.

Our daughter loves to draw…actually, since she was a little girl she spends extended period of times on drawing. Maybe, I was busy with my work in the computer and her as a little girl used to seat next to me with colors and paper and would draw…Here, I have to specify not just coloring books; she preferred to draw her own picture, her own story... Nowadays drawing is one of her most favorite activity.

As mentioned earlier, I used to draw in her age, too; I drew it in the memory picture as well. But of course mine was not like my daughter’s. I encourage her but in my childhood it was an occasional event, during our free time only.

But, here she can draw even alligator in her math exam, when she is doing < or > signs. It is always okay with her teacher. So much encouragement here! Even in the school, amazing!

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

As a child, the mother had a consistent study pattern in which play was not a priority. Her parents were always careful to monitor her health, study habits, and homework, but they did not pay much attention to play. In addition to completing her daily homework, she had to practice handwriting and math. The mother recalled:

“Education does not have any enemy”: that was my father’s saying all the time.

You know! Play was not the priority…there were lots of affections and support from parents but never so much consciousness about playtime.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)
During the conversation, the mother recalled her childhood from the perspective of an as a mainstream Indian child. She considered her family was a middle-class Indian family, in which education was recognized as the main key to success and therefore the parents were more focused on education than play. As a mother in this country, however, she was enjoying various play opportunities with her children. The mother also mentioned that with her first-born child, she and her husband learned about many new opportunities of play, and with the second child, they were more inclined to try them. As an example, the mother provided the following (see Figure 3):

**Figure 3:** An example of the mother’s lunch box note

She tried to teach some morals to her child in a playful way. In the child’s lunchbox, she included “good sayings” that were relevant to the child’s understanding. With some silly
and funny sayings, with colorful and crazy pictures, with funny stickers or stickers of the child’s favorite characters the mother put these plain white flashcards in her child’s lunchbox periodically to signify the importance of the messages.

**Mother’s childrearing goals**

The mother stated that education was her first and foremost priority. She could not compromise on her child’s education and the need for hard work. At the same time, she wanted to build a strong foundation for her child’s future so that her child would be successful.

My goal is to facilitate… I can see myself in her… the opportunity I did not receive I want to provide for her.

As I was mentioning before that I came from a very small town. Where I did not get many opportunities to do any extracurricular activities besides my routine study work. But in this country I can provide that for my children. It is available here. Also, it is encouraged here in U.S.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

The mother also understood that play was important; after coming this country, she began to recognize the support and encouragement of play for young children. The fact that participation in play and extracurricular activities during the school year was respected here amazed her. The mother noted that this continued even in college, which was a revelation to her. She tried to balance her child’s academics and extracurricular activities. She wanted to build her child’s strength in a playful way. She believed that as a
mother, she needed to guide her child, but she also thought that a child should not feel pressured but rather enjoy the process of developing his or her skills. The mother reminded the researcher that this did not mean education could be compromised however.

First education then rest…

You may have great idea or thinking but to establish that you need a solid foundation and to build that foundation you have to study…. you have to work hard

( Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

The mother believed, proper education would help her child to establish a strong foundation and would develop her ability to make prudent decisions as an adult. Therefore, the mother prioritized education, if possible in a playful way, as she has seen done by other parents in this country. The mother suggested that she should continue to allow her daughter to have playtime as long as she could.

The target child’s activities that the participant-mother considers to be play

This section highlights the mothers’ perceptions of play as well as their play practices with the target children. In order to do so, it analyzes the data collected during the interviews, observations, and weeklong diaries.

At the beginning of the conversation, participant-mother #1 told the researcher that she had learned to value play differently after arriving in this country. Her support
for and encouragement of play started with her first-born, but it developed more when her second child was born and she became more exposed to this country’s cultural practices, its educational system, and its idea of childhood. Participant-mother #1 said that she worked to arrange her child’s playtime and play dates, as well as to provide suitable resources for her child’s play, because she realized that “play is so important in the early age of a child.” She told the researcher that as an adult, she still enjoyed playing and therefore she made sure that her children played, too, but that the children’s play had to be related to some kind of learning. In other words, the mother subscribed to the concept of teaching through play in early years. She felt that her children should play and learn at the same time.

Absolutely! I still like to play; if I would have time, I would play whole day. But not all of them will be outdoors or physical play; there will be some mental play, too. Such as, reading books will be my variation of play.

As an example, when I used to push her in the swing, as in this picture, yes, she was a baby! I used to push her and used to count one, two, and three…. Tried to teach her numbers.

You know, in India we started to memorize the numbers from very early age. Same consideration here; I believe earlier is better! But I choose to teach her in playful way.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/28/16)

During the interview process and observations, as well as through information provided by the mother, one particular preference of the target child emerged: that is, the target child’s fascination with writing and drawing. The mother repeatedly said to the researcher that her daughter preferred to write rather than play, and that most of her
daughter’s free time was spent either writing or drawing. The mother wanted to provide support for and encouragement to her child in every way.

I did read lots of book by myself or loved to draw but never got the opportunities to compete or nobody was there as a mentor for that in my childhood…

( Participant-mother #1, 03/28/16)

Based on the interviews, it became clear that the participant-mother took the opportunities that this country provided to nourish her daughter’s playful creativity through her writing. Since the child truly enjoying it, the mother encouraged her more. The mother could not ignore her father’s saying, “Education is the key to success,” but at the same time, she wanted to encourage her child’s playful activities. She believed:

Sheryl Sandberg’s thoughts

You have to take opportunities and make an opportunity fit for you, rather than the other way around. - Sheryl Sandberg mentioned in, Lean in, you know!

( Participant-mother #1, 03/28/16)

The mother mentioned that she had bought her daughter her own writing tools, and that she had submitted her stories to different competitions. Recently the mother had sent her daughter’s story to a Scholastic storybook competition, the little girl had had to be on a strict time schedule for two weeks. During those two weeks, she came home from school every day and wrote and illustrated part of the story. According to the mother, the child was up late every night.
But she loved it. Enjoyed the intense process!

This is her play; she enjoys this … I never asked her, you know, whenever she has time she will draw and write a story. It comes to her naturally. So, this type of play is happening in the house most of the time.

She plays with her friends when they come over. Actually, she does not have same age children in our neighborhood to play with. In that scenario, either my husband or I have to drive her to her friend’s house to play.

Oh, yes! She loves to play electronics games. I monitor the time of her play on the electronics devices. To cut down the screen time, I introduced writing to her. Now she started to write and getting imaginative and creative as well as developing her concentration. Which will be really helpful in the future for her, I believe in it.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/28/16)

The mother did not want her daughter to lose her skills and creativity. She considered reading and writing a good play activity for her child, and as a mother, she wanted to give her daughter support and encouragement.

I give my children dreams - dreams of having a rich life, dreams to become a world citizen, dreams to create a legacy. I believe without dreams one ceases to exist. My next plans to take her to a storytelling conference and in her teenage year women's conference.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/28/16)

The mother showed the researcher the cover page (see Figure 4) and read a couple of pages (see figure 5) from her computer, as the book was still under evaluation. She let the researcher use the cover page and the first page for the study.
Figure 4: The cover page of the book (03/28/16).

Dear readers, this is the story of three young hamsters: Applesauce, Berry, and Clementine. They went on an adventurous adventure to Jelly Landia. Over their stay, they got lost. And they had to work together to find their way home.

Yours truly,

Narrator

Figure 5: The first page of the book (03/28/16).
Participant-mother #1 also mentioned her preferences for game with flashcards. On a snowy day, she said, the family to play these cards games to develop the children’s Math and English skills. The mother specified that she had learned about these games from her son’s, kindergarten teacher:

I preferred her to play cards too. I personally think it is a great game for the children. She is playing and having fun with her brother, father or me, who ever is available during that particular, play time. You know, I always encourage her to play card games with math or language. Sometimes I make a weekly chart for my daughter to follow the play pattern. We never had those opportunities, like learn through the cards as a child. Always we had to memorize these facts, numbers etc.

( Participant-mother #1, 03/28/16)

Observations of and interview with target child #1

During observations, it was noticeable that the target child enjoyed writing in her free time. One weekday, Thursday, April 7, the researcher visited the family around 4:15pm. After coming home from school with her nanny. After finishing her snack the T.V. was turned off, and she started to do her homework. The brother was not home during that time because of his after-school soccer practice.

Every day after coming from school I watch the TV and eat snack… Mom wants me to relax first. She tells it is important to rest your brain

( Participant-child #1, 04/07/16)
It took the child only 45 minutes to finish her homework. As soon as she was done, she took her iPad and started to write. The child told the researcher:

I love to write stories…

_Dada_ (elder brother) has work to do… he has a l…o…t…of study, so to occupy myself, I like going to my iPad to draw or write a story. Santa gave an iPad to write stories…Mom always tells me to write and draw…then I can publish

(Participant-child #1, 04/07/16)

The plot of the target child’s story was about a little girl’s skip boarding with her friends; as the child described the topic of her writing to the researcher:

It is about skip boarding … not in real life though but it is virtual skip boarding …with friends… I just started the story, hmmmmm… it will take a while.

(Participant-child #1, 04/07/16)

There were few toys here and there in her room, but the room was mostly filled with books and different kind of writing pads and drawing materials. The researcher was informed that on the weekdays, the target child had to finish one or two math practice pages assigned by her mother or father and practice the piano before she was allowed to play any computer games or play with her older brother. Sometimes, the child said, friends came over or the child went to their houses if her mother had set up play dates but these activities happened only the weekend or snow days. She enjoyed reading together as a family but:
My most favorite things to do is to write a story… it is so much fun… Sometimes I illustrate it first then write it …then…then you can see the story

(Participant-child 1, 04/07/16)

Notes from the weeklong diary about target child #1’s play:

The child’s preference for writing and drawing manifested itself in the weekly journal provided by the child’s mother. On all five days, the child wrote, and over the weekend, the child continued her writing. She read storybooks and did drawing, too, during the week, but she did not play any other games.

During the observations on weekdays and the weekend, the researcher found the same pattern in the child’s behavior. The target child and the mother considered creative writing a fun, playful activity, based on the weeklong diary as well as the observations.

The target child’s activities over time, as described by her mother

Participant-mother #1 said that ever since the target child was a young girl, she had loved to do crafts and draw. Tiredness or sickness did not interfere with her participation in these particular activities, as seen in this photo provided by her mother:

She was still five years old. She had a high fever for couple of days and became
very weak I did not let her to go to school on that day... As you see in this picture (see Figure 6), she is engaged with craft...

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 6:** The target child is busy with an activity, even while she was sick

This photograph shows the child at five years old. She is engaged with toys but with crafts. There in only one doll in the photograph, all the way in the back near the door, while the rest of the objects in the photograph are books, math worksheets, notebooks, and craft papers with coloring pencils, and scissors, among other supplies.

The mother mentioned that her daughter’s reading habits began developing at an early age. The mother described how the child would read early in the morning on the weekends. Weekends for the family were always busy with different activities, but the days usually started at 9:00am. The parents wanted their children to sleep a bit longer to catch up the sleep that they had missed during the week. The mother described how the little girl wake up early as usual, however, and go to the reading room to read her book: “She will not wake us up but will read for hours before we are up …she just loves it and of course we encourage that,” said the mother.
Read Across America Day, 2014 Celebration at school. She is six in this picture. My daughter wanted to participate. She wanted to be in *Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus* T-shirt. So Mommy woke up at 4:30 a.m. before she woke up, to make this T-shirt for her (see Figure 7).

![Figure 7: Before going to school on a special day](image)

Participant-mother #1 considered reading books to be play; thus she provided this picture of the target child. This picture highlights, the mother’s playfulness through drawing and her encouragement of reading. The mother suggested that through her hard work and motivation, she could set an example for her children.

The mother and father in this household also encouraged physical activities. The parents believed physical activities could help children to learn to be organized, face challenges and handle failures, develop socialization skills, and become physically fit.
The target child was not ready for any competitive sports yet, however. She was only willing to play with her brother or a few of her friends in their backyard.

This is the picture (see Figure 8) of her first basketball game. Last year I enrolled her in basketball. I encourage her to participate in sports: it is important, you know! But she did not like it. Before every practice she used to have stomach ache. I think she was not ready then. I will try again.

It is important to be in a team… it teaches a child a lot!

Figure 8: The target child playing basketball at her school

Last summer she was playing with her brother in our backyard (see Figure 9). Both of them play together, especially outdoors game.

When they play together, I really enjoy that moment. It reminds me my childhood with my brother
Figure 9: The target child playing with her brother in their backyard

In this picture (see Figure 10) she was six years old. That year we visited to India. My parents are still in India, and we try to visit them every year. In this picture, she is playing with her cousins, along with her brother. They love to play Bananagram.

Figure 10: The target child playing with her cousins in India
This is a recent picture of our daughter playing in the snow with her friend on a snowy day (see Figure 11). The school was closed because of the heavy snowfall. I love to watch her play with her friend and love to hear their giggles!

![Image of children playing in snow](image)

**Figure 11:** The target child enjoying playing with her friends

In this picture she is writing in her diary before going to bed (see Figure 12). She said she need to keep the diary by her bedside because she prefers to write early in the morning, as soon as she wakes up from her sleep. She also mentioned the reason behind this preference… as she mentioned, in the morning her dreams are fresh.

She was writing a story today about 1817 during this time and in between her writings she was surfing the Internet to get the “historical facts”

So I asked her why she chose 1817. She replied, “Because it is a prime number. If you think about a number you don't think about 17 as a number. But I do.”
Mother’s perceptions of her changing views of play

In India children are raised in their own Indian style. Education and study are more prioritized among the Indian parents. That does not mean that children do not play over there. Here in America as an immigrant parents from India we are emphasizing the study but value the play, too, but obviously we increased the playtime for our children than the children who are residing in India.

(Participant-mother #1, 04/16/16)

The answers provided by participant-mother #1 suggest that Indian parents are more concerned about their children’s education than they are about play. As a result, Indian parents overlook the importance of play, even in children’s early years. Participant-mother #1 gave an example from her childhood:

I remember...as a kid when I was alone by myself, I used to look at the water stain

Figure 12: The target child writing in her diary (03/20/16; 8:45pm)
in the bedroom wall in a particular corner. I do not know how those stain created but only knew these are the water stain. As an adult, now I realized those were dampness of the wall. I used to look at those and gave them different characters and used to have created stories in my mind.

For me in my childhood it was just play; there were no thought behind the play from my parents as well. It was only just play and fun for them…their daughter is enjoying the watermark … I believe that was all.

(Participant-mother #1, 04/16/16)

The mother clearly indicated, that her view of play had changed since arriving in the U.S., as she was learning a lot from her time in the country. With her first-born child, she was trying to put her new understandings into practice. The researcher asked what the mother thought had changed, and the mother replied:

When we used to play, I think my mother never thought of the idea of cognitive development behind it. I strongly believe my parents did consider play as a fun, play as a joy, and play enhance the physical fitness

As per my daughter, it has to be more than play.

As per the watermarks example, if my daughter imagines any character there, I would consider visual perceptions, shape, and sizes…will engage if needed to develop her creative thinking and imaginations… I would definitely encourage her to create a story, and for that I will be a good listener of her story, may be a curious listener, who has lot a of question … just to stimulate her to think more.

I will consciously try to strengthen her observation skill

(Participant-mother #1, 04/16/16)

The mother believed her immigration to a different country helped her to see things differently and to adopt new practices. After coming to the U.S., the mother
realized that children could learn through play; in another words, play could be used for purposes other than physical development or fun. The mother truly recognized this after sending her first child to school, where the mother came into greater contact with the dominant culture. Initially she and her husband thought that there son was not learning anything (academic) at school; they thought that he was just having fun, or basically playing. At that time, they had only just been introduced to the school system and because of their experience in India, it seemed very difficult to them. The parents were confused and relied on a childrearing style that reflected their Indian culture. Therefore, their older son’s childhood was more influenced by Indian culture than their daughter’s. According to the mother, “It was not too long though.”

It was with her first-born child that the mother first experienced how smoothly a child could absorb information through play. Volunteering in her child’s kindergarten classroom, “was truly eye-opening for me.” The parents slowly started to apply play practices in their childrearing rather than emphasizing memorization.

We are more flexible and adventurous with our daughter than our son. We were new then and now we are for it.

(Participant-mother #1, 04/16/16)

The mother practiced play more with her second child than with her first. The mother appreciated the playful preschool years in the U.S. (as compared to in India) and followed the American approach to play in teaching her children from then onwards.
I personally learned a lot of thing in America… from parenting to professional extents.

(Participant-mother #1, 04/16/16)

To understand participant-mother #1’s perception of the change in her view of play, the researcher asked the mother what she anticipated her view of play would be if she were to go back to India.

Yes, definitely things will be changed. Because, I do think America has influenced me: I personally learned a lot here...

In India we value education; we always try to compete with others and want to excel than others. So reinforce some idea of education through play will be little challenging for me.

I assume, perhaps I would say that I would be more informed parent, which my parents never did. I will have more control on my child’s play. I will monitor their play and playtime. Despite of the competitive study pattern in India I might introduce play as a tool for learning and developing.

More specifically, I assume it will be well blended. As a result, it would not be the same like my parents did for us. Teaching with play will be more common in our lives in India if I go back.

(Participant-mother #1, 04/16/16)

Participant-mother #1 experienced the benefits of play after arriving in the U.S. As a mother, she recognized that if she went back to India and raised her children there, she would want to take the lessons that she had learned while in the States with her. As a result, play through learning would be her childrearing style; she would introduce play as a tool for learning and developing.
Summary

Even though education was the first priority, the participant mother #1 largely recognized the significant components of child #1’s play. The mother indicated that her principal concerns were her child’s “learning,” “developing hard work ethics,” and “goal achievement.” All of these components were reflected in her child’s play and play-like activities.

There were evidences of play practice in various forms throughout the house, as well as mother #1’s involvement and support. Immigration helped her to understand how a child can develop his/her skills and strengths in a playful way. As a mother, she was not only experiencing playful an early childhood with her child, but also noticed how smoothly her child could absorb information and develop her intensities through play. Due to these formative experiences, participant mother #1 was able to apply play practices in her childrearing for purposes other than physical development.

Based on the week-long diary, and other observations, the target child and the mother considered creative writing to be a fun and playful activity. Despite her busy professional life, the mother actively engaged with her daughter’s play and play-like activities as a “facilitator.” Through the opportunities present to her, mother #1 was able to nourish her daughter’s play by encouraging her interest in writing. Since the child truly enjoyed this activity, her mother encouraged her in many different ways. Mother #1 highly valued the Indian parenting style of parental support, guidance, and engagement, but with moderation. With the introduction of competitions and other resources, mother #1 was able to stimulate her child by helping her further develop her creativity, motivate new ideas, and create the autonomy for free thinking.
Chapter Five

Presentation and Analysis of Data (Case #2)

Introducing participant-mother #2 (age: 45)

Participant-mother #2 was born and raised in India. After finishing college, she came to the U.S. as a proficient graduate student from a prominent engineering college in India. She later established herself as a professional in the U.S. Her husband also came to the U.S. with her with the same academic status and at the same time. Both of them had received job offers from an U.S. company at the end of their third year of engineering college, in India. Later her husband completed Ph.D. in engineering while in the U.S., and participant-mother #2 pursued a professional career. At the time the researcher met them, they had been in the U.S. for 22 years. They were living in New Jersey with their two sons, who were 15 years and 9 years old. The 9-years-old son is the target child in this study.

The school I used to go to be very competitive school so I had to study a lot to maintain my good grades. You know, in India how the school create the pressure on the childhood… no matter how much you study, you have to study even more than what you did before; then only there is a possibility to go to the next level, successfully. That pressure was always with me. So, play had to be tailored

I was the only child, and my father had to travel a lot. Most of the time my mother and I, two of us … my mother is very quiet person; back then she was the same…as quite as she is now, so reading story book was one of our the favorite thing…(pause)…we used to read a lot…we had a mini-library in our house

We played, too, but mostly during the summer vacations or holidays… sometimes on Sundays, too.
Actually, you know, my play was associated to my homework… weekdays mean school, homework, vocal practice; my days were pretty much in these routine

(Participant-mother #2, 3/17/16)

This chapter presents the case in terms of the following categories:

a) Mother’s own childhood play memories
b) Target child’s play activities and mother’s engagement in her child’s play
c) Mother’s childrearing goals
d) Target child’s activities that the participant mother considers to be play
e) Observations of and interview with the target child
f) Notes from the weeklong diary about the target child’s play
g) The target child’s activities over time, as described by his mother
h) Mother’s perceptions of her changing views of play

Mother’s own childhood play memories

Participant-mother #2 was born and raised in an apartment complex in Kolkata, India. As the mother explained, the housing complex was not a gated property, but it was very well-protected with high walls. It was safe for little children to play outside because people at the time knew each other very well, and the complex was not located near busy roads. There were few children the same age as her, however, especially when she was young.
It was a quiet housing complex when I was growing up. There were not enough kids, especially not in my age...later during my early middle school year, kids moved in...but I had few friends from my school with whom I used to play as a young kid. They were not living in the same housing complex but in another neighborhood, so to play with each other, our mother had to arrange the time and day.

( Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

As an only child, participant-mother #2 remembered her childhood very discretely. Most of the time, school and homework, as well as the extra homework given by her mother, occupied her weekdays. On the weekend (only Sunday) she had some time designated for play.

We had school on Saturdays. That day was our weekly test day and church day.

I used to go to a missionary school. On Saturdays from school we used to go to the church; worked in the garden, used to dusting and washing the windows, chairs, benches like that...you know, like community work here. After that we used to have our lunch...the church provided the lunch for the children on Saturdays. As a little kid we loved our Saturday’s work. It was fun!

We, as a little kid at home never got chance to do any of these work...we were always baby to our parents...you know how is our culture... (little smile) in age 45, I am still baby to my parents... so much love and affection ...

( Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

Participant-mother #2 talked to the researcher while she was drawing (see Figure 13). The researcher noticed that the mother was initially very hesitant to draw, claiming that she was incapable of drawing and acting shy. After more conversation, however, the
mother’s reluctance started to disappear, and she started to draw. While drawing the mother began to talk about her childhood and experiences of play.

As my childhood play, most of the time I played by myself
I used to go to the park to play…here I drew it.

We used to have a nice park near our housing complex with slides, swings, see-saw, plain grass field to run and play... My mother and I used to go there.

Sometimes mom and my friend’s mom arranged a playtime for us (friend and her), too. Then, my friend and I could play together…

Here I tried to draw few picture with few stick figures.

As a only child I developed the habit of being by myself…so reading books was my one of the favorite habit in the childhood rather than going out and play… you know, it was not a option for me may be that is why I learned to be by myself and used to read or play by myself…to be honest, I never felt lonely…

My parents were always there for me… parents’ supports, love, and advices are still is my big strength.
I would not have been who I am today without my parents continuous guidance and support.

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)
Figure 13: Drawing task; participant-mother #2 (03/17/16).
Participant-mother #2 showed the researcher her drawing. She played with dolls and pretend-kitchen with or without her friends. The mother believed that being without friends and being an only child, she develops an interest to play by herself or read by herself, and never felt lonely.

During the summer break I also played with friends either in my house or my friend’s house…it was an extended hours playtime…The river Ganges is very close by to our house. Actually our apartment complex was by the river. The riverside was another play area during my childhood. I loved to play badminton with my father (whenever he had time off) or with friends over there.

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

Participant-mother #2 mentioned that summer vacation was her main playtime. After finishing a few math problems, a handwriting exercise, or some extra homework given by her mother in the morning, she had some free time to play. She remembered that besides reading storybooks in her childhood, she enjoyed playing Carrom Board with her mother, or with both of her parents if her father was home.

My mother loved to play Carrom Board. When my father was around during the Sunday, we used to go to the riverside for a picnic, like a day out. Again, depends on schoolwork…we used to spend the whole day by the river with games, reading books, badminton. My father loved to take the board there to play Carrom.

Sometimes, my friends would join to spend the day with us. As a family play we used to go to picnics by the river. I did many picnics with my school friends, too, by the river and played cards, badminton, Carrom Board or read books.

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)
Participant-mother #2 said that she loved to read books as a play activity, but she never was a bookworm. She also mentioned that as an adult, even though at the end of the day she was tired, the childhood play habit of reading books still remained with her. She could not go to sleep without reading a book.

That habit is still with me. Without a book I cannot fall asleep…reading helps me to relax!

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

The researcher took notes on the house as part of the data-collection process. In the house, there was a separate study room with build-in bookshelves, like a mini-library. In the corner of the study room there was a section for magazines. Most of the magazines there were children’s magazines, such as Highlights, Creative Kids, Xplor, and Discovery Kids, among others, though there were also some issues of Time and National Geographic.

The target child’s play activities and mother’s engagement in her child’s play

The researcher wanted to better understand the drawing the mother did at the bottom of the page of her drawing task (about her son) when he was a young child. Participant-mother #2 recalled her son’s childhood play as a “very quiet kid’s play.”
He loves to listen to the music since he was a baby. We (both the parents) used to play assorted music for him, and he used to throw his hands and legs with the rhythms, with joy as a baby.

When he was 2 years, we bought him a CD player. It was his first CD player and … his personal CD player, the kid’s version of course, he loved it. Always he kept it next to him. Wherever he used to go, the player had to go too, with him. Even during the bedtime, that player had to stay with him.

I have a 14 years’ son; he enjoys music but during that age he was not like my younger one. He liked to listen the music but was not that passionate like his younger brother.

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

Participant-mother #2 and her husband used to sing with the target child. They always made sure that at least one of them was singing with him when he was a baby. They believed children needed support and encouragement from their parents. According to the mother, the young son loved to sing. The mother added:

Nowadays he loves to recite more than singing. He still listens though, just love to listen different kind of songs.

We have a Bengali organization here. My husband and I are actively involved in it. So, we do drama, recitation cultural event once a year: my both children participate in it, so do we.

Actually through these cultural events we, as a parents trying to provide some essence of our Indian culture…It is hard to maintain your cultural things in a different settings, to practice your tradition and teach that to the next generation is really hard but we are trying, that is all!

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)
Both the parents and the younger son usually participated in play activities (see Figure 14) while the older son played the violin during cultural events. The target child participated in the children’s play activities, and the parents participated in the adults’ play activities. According to the mother, her children enjoyed the play activities but did not like the intense practices. The practices ran for several months, usually after school or on the weekends. To convince the children to go to the practices was difficult but they enjoy the event as a participant (see Figure 15)
It is not an argument rather convincing them with a positive tone; as soon as they are in the rehearsal hall they are fine! They just love it. They are doing it since they are little…

Figure 15: The target child last year at a Bengali cultural event

My husband and I believe that we have to guide our children, we have to show them the right paths to choose from.

He plays video game, too, but not too often. Rather watch his dada (elder brother) and his friends play.

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

As the interview continued, the mother described the target child’s interest in Legos (see Figure 16). The child played with toy cars, but mostly with Legos. He loved to make his own cars with Legos and then to play with them. For example, the mother mentioned that the target child often played with Legos for hours. He also played
electronic games, but he typically preferred to watch his brother’s. However, he had recently developed an interest in playing Lego-related electronics games by himself. The mother also described how the target child was very quiet, like his grandmother but the difference was:

She (grandmother) is reading, and he is building things with Lego. It is so nice to see both of them side by side. My mom visits us frequently, since my father passed away. She loves to spend her time in his (the target child’s) room. Usually she comes during the summer break, so schools are closed and afternoon they spend together in his room like that.

**Figure 16**: In the target child’s room (observation; 04/05/16).
Participant-mother #2 and her husband encouraged their son to play with Legos whenever he (the target child) had time. Both the parents believed that playing Legos was an influential activity in a child’s early years. They thought that it would not only provide enjoyment for the child, but it would also help the child excel in various aspects of development: it would help to make him a logical and smart thinker. The mother also thought that Legos would help her son to develop the strength of concentration. The mother believed:

To excel in any areas in your life you must learn to concentrate… I believe, concentration is very important to pursue your goal.

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

Since the target child did not have any other children with whom to play in their neighborhood, most of the time he had to play by himself with Legos (see Figure 17). His parents did arrange some playdates for him, though, and they also spent time playing with him.

Everything nowadays related with Legos for him. I do encourage that, too. I believe it helps to sharp a child’s intellectuality, creativity … you know, its trigger his intelligence overall. On top of everything, he loves to play with Legos.

He can play with Legos for hours. I always encourage him to play Legos as he really enjoys playing this game…it is his favorite game…

We love to give him a company when he plays with Legos …encourage him to share his ideas about his project. It is very interesting! But with our professional commitment it is not possible all the time, you know…

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)
Since the parents noticed the target child’s enthusiasm for Legos, in order to promote the further development of his skills, they began to take him to competitions (see Figure 18). The mother shared a picture of his winning Lego creation:

During the weekday he does not always have enough time to play, but weekend he is in his room and spend lots of hours by engaging him with Legos. Do you know Robotics, the recent version of Legos? He loves it. I can show you his creations. I think he did a great job!

( Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)
Prior to the researcher’s visit the target child had participated in a Lego competition for which the parents had to drive him one and half hours. To prepare the child for the competition, the mother encouraged the child to practice regularly. Therefore, on weekdays after school or in the evenings, the parents made sure he was playing with Legos “as long as there is a continuity,” said the mother:
Well! My parents always were there with me. Lots of supports, love, affections, and they encourage me to play as well but during the free time. I remember, my mother was always stayed up late while I studied…

The main difference here, they never thought the play is important for my development or they can teach me some content through play. That never exists in India. All text-based and theoretical learning were over there; I believe it is still there. Play is good for recreation or play is good for relaxation, but it is important for young children for their different kind of maturity: in India, parents do not think that…at least my mother never thought that.

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)

Though she grew up with different beliefs and practices, participant-mother #2 was fascinated by the new ideas she encountered in the U.S.: the importance of play, the encouragement to play, and the practice of playful learning. As a hands-on mother, she always tried to encourage her sons to play. Both of the parents loved to arrange play times for their sons. It was not easy to organize these for both of them because of the parents’ busy professional lives, but still they tried their best to arrange family play times frequently:

We also value the family play time…As a family event we do go for swimming and biking, but not a lot. Not only our professional commitment, our children are so much engaged with different activities… it is not easy to find the playtime, as a family During the weekdays, school and office, homework and housework, and preparation for next day take all the time. It is very much structural time schedule for our family…you have to; don’t you think?

(Participant-mother #2, 03/17/16)
When participant-mother #2 came to the end of describing her child’s play activities, the researcher met the target child. He was holding a sports car made out of Legos and quietly came to his mother and sat next to her for a few minutes. The mother introduced him and his partially built toy, and the child smiled and left after saying “Bye.” The target child seemed to be a shy and quiet child, just as his mother had described.

Mother’s childrearing goals

I believe my parent did not have any goal set about my play ever, but here, if I let my child to play, first I would think, what would be the benefit? Why he will play that kind of play? It has to relate with some learning

(Participant-mother #2, 03/19/16)

Participant-mother #2 described her attitude as an “aware mother.” She believed that before doing something, an individual should think twice. The mother recognized that as parents they have an emotive role to play in the U.S, sometimes it is very puzzling. She and her husband were here in this country, far away from their family, and sometimes it was very challenging, as both the parents were unfamiliar with the country’s cultural practices. As the mother explained:

Sleepover, in India we never had that. With our children we exposed in this practice. Now as a first-generation immigrant, my husband and I were extremely hesitant…to consult with our parents was not easy as they cannot picture the circumstances… you know as an immigrant it is always an issue; adjustment… sometimes it is really challenging!

But with play practices not only us, our family in India okay, too, specifically in
our child’s early childhood. However, play has to be related with learning…

We as a parent has to secure our child future with good education… So I would say, education will be our top of the list as our goal.

( Participant-mother #2, 03/19/16)

The mother also stated that to accomplish their goals, the parents had to work hard and stay focused. As a mother, she wanted her sons to accomplish their goals with hard work as well. She considered:

Nothing come easy; you need preparations and practices. As a mother/parents, the goal is to show the children the right path and guide them through it, and to teach them hard workmanship.

( Participant-mother #2, 03/19/16)

She also wanted her children to be happy and healthy human beings and hoped that they will learn to respect themselves as well as others. The mother believed that a good education would help her children to develop these skills. With education her children would be able to see things from broader perspectives. The mother also appreciated this culture’s play practices for young children. Both the husband and wife wanted to continue to emphasize play with their children as long as it did not interfere with study patterns or grades.

To provide the playful life in their early age is our goal too. You know, play helps to release stress, it helps to bond together; play also help to teach you to be organized, and many more…
We got this opportunity and will try to continue as far as we can.

( Participant-mother #2, 03/19/16)

The target child’s activities that the participant-mother considers to be play

This section highlights the mothers’ perceptions of play as well as their play practices with the target children. In order to do so, it analyzes the data collected during the interviews, observations, and weeklong diaries.

We enjoy play as a whole family
...as we live in New Jersey the outdoor play is not possible throughout the year and so our family play is very seasonal. Winter means mostly indoor and spring, summer, and fall, outdoor...as I mentioned before, our sons and us, we go out for biking a lot!

( Participant-mother #2, 04/07/16)

Besides the board games and puzzles with his parents and older brother, the target child’s most favorite play activity was building with Legos. As soon as he finished his schoolwork he loved to go to his room and build. The family supported his creativity through play and encouraged him to practice his building skills. The parents loved to take him to the Legoland. Discovery Center in Westchester, New York. During the upcoming summer for his birthday treat, they were planning to take him to Legoland in California for a week.
You have to support the child’s activity, their enthusiasm… As we were discussing, it helps to build the child’s strong foundation so many way… I think when they are constructing by themselves they are building the strength that is much better than forcefully imposing it.

(Participant-mother #2, 04/07/16)

The mother also encouraged her child to join a tennis club with his older brother. Even though the boys would be in two different levels, she thought that it might inspire him to play. She wanted to give him the same opportunities that she had provided for her older son. The target child was going to start the lessons in the summer and if he enjoyed them, the parents would encourage him to continue with them.

As I mentioned, he loves music since he was a baby… still he loves the music but in its diverse rather wider span; with listening and appreciating music, he is enjoying recitation, acting in drama … all these.

(Participant-mother #2, 04/07/16)

Participant-mother #2 considered all these activities, and specifically acting as play activities since all these activities happened in the target child’s leisure time and he enjoyed them. The mother was aware that the talents that her son used during these activities were not typical, but she thought that the activities were playful ways of cultivating the child’s musical mind. The mother also believed the activities was educating him on different perspectives; they would help him to be imaginative, conscientious, and creative both for now and in his future life.
Observations of and interview with the target child #2

The family’s house was very organized with a few separate play areas: in the study room there were puzzles, in the living room there were cards, and in the target child’s room there were Legos.

It was Tuesday, April 5, afternoon at 4:00 pm when the researcher visited the house. The target child had come home from school and changed out of his school clothes. He came into the kitchen to have a snack. When his nanny asked about his homework, the child replied that he did not have very much; he only had word studies and Home Link for math as his homework. While he was having his snack, his mother called and he told her about his school day and his assigned homework. During snack time the child did not watch television; rather he read the new *Highlights* magazine that had arrived with the day’s mail.

It did not take too long for the child to finish his schoolwork at the kitchen table. After gathering everything in his school bag, the child put his bag in the office downstairs and invited the researcher to go with him upstairs to his room. He had a very colorful room with different Lego structures, most of which had been created by him. In one corner of his room, there was a large red covered box full of Legos. In other corners of his room, there were other boxes with different sizes of Legos. There were many boxes with labels describing the Legos’ sizes arranged alongside his bed. All the boxes were organized and labeled with description. He started to play with the Legos, describing his current project to the researcher. The child said that he was making a robot/superhero. According to the child, the robot/superhero would be able to guess who the harmful
people of the world were, and with his power he would able to capture these people and put them in a cage. As the child’s story was going on; it will collect them from all over the world. Later, he would turn their evil minds into caring minds. Instead of destroying the people, the robot/superhero would help these imprisoned people to be free from the cage and live happy lives.

As the conversation continued, the child shared his preferences for playing. The child said that he enjoyed playing as a family, but his most favorite play activity was Legos with his brother. The child also liked to act and play music, and he was excited to learn the tennis with his brother.

My most favorite thing is Lego… I love building Legos, and I have joined my friends in a Lego building and programming competition called FLL last year. We learned to program our Lego robots using EV3 programming language and we spent time building missions for competing with other groups. It was quite challenging but I loved it. I also love to sing and listen to lots of songs in my spare time. I participate in group singing and performing activities with my community friends on special Bengali occasions. Playing with my mom and dad and dada (elder brother) is even better… it does not have to be Legos, no…it could be anything (with a smile) We go for biking and swimming too…in the summer time we do all those fun stuff! Ma said, I would start tennis lessons; like dada, soon…I am excited! It will be fun… then dada will teach me the techniques, too, he is a good tennis player. Playing with dada is so much fun!

(Participant-child #2, 04/07/16)

Notes from the weeklong diary about target child #2’s play:

According to the weeklong diary, the child played all seven days with Legos, mostly during the evening hours. On the weekdays, he played for only a limited time
because of his homework and tests, but over the weekends the child was able to play Legos for extended periods of time. He also played the Lego building game with his brother on Sunday afternoon on their home computer. On Saturday, the child attended the Bengali organization’s cultural play practice for an upcoming event on October, followed by the birthday party of a family friend. At the friend’s house, the child played outdoor soccer with all of the other children for an extended period of a time (see Figure 19). His brother played with him, too.

Figure 19: Photo of target child’s outdoor soccer: photo shared by mother
The target child’s activities over time, as described by his mother

The mother was very excited to show the researcher photographs of her children’s activities (see figures, 20 & 21) which were stored in an album. As she looked for pictures of her youngest son the mother explained that her son had been a quiet child since he was a baby.

Usually my youngest son is shy and quiet child. But when it comes to play and his kind of play, he becomes brave and do not hesitate to face the challenges! This picture is one of them. He was going to the big sky slope all by himself last year, 2015, sometime in February at Pocono Mountain. I was scared to death but he was okay and excited!

Figure 20: The target child skiing in the Poconos
Both of my sons love snow. At least once a year we have to take them to the ski resort at the Pocono Mountain, so they can ski. This is a picture of playing in the backyard of our house. He enjoys playing with his elder brother.

![Image of two children playing in snow](image1)

**Figure 21**: The target child: 2 playing in the snow with his brother

With his brother he loves to play. My elder one loves that, too. All long his *dada* (elder brother) around he is not shy at all. In this picture he was 6 years old. He was not hesitate to play with others but holding his brother’s hand and then joined to the group (see Figure 22)

![Image of children playing with statues in a park](image2)

**Figure 22**: The target child #2 playing with the older children at Chicago’s Navy Pier
The mother described her youngest child as preferring to stay close by her and helping her to prepare food in the kitchen. The mother let him play with unbreakable kitchen items and ingredients such as dough, orange peel, apple peel, and string beans in his early years. Whatever his mother did, he copied her. When he grew up, he started to bake with his mother. The mother helped him to learn how to bake and enjoyed this mother-son time in the kitchen (see Figure 23):

My son loves to bake. Whenever I am baking, he would come to the kitchen and would help me. When he was a little kid I used to give a spoon to stir or gave him a small portion of flour dough to play as clay. He loved it. Used to make different shapes… actually the basic concept of the shapes he learned by playing with dough. You know, we Indian people love warm and fresh roti (tortillas), I try to make them home and he played with the dough then, and now he tries to help me to roll the dough

Figure 23: Target child #2 baking cupcakes for his school

The family encouraged the target child’s skills in building using different objects. The mother believed that it was the parents’ responsibility to provide the opportunities
and encouragement for the child to do what he or she loved. The child’s building skills started to develop when he discovered blocks as a child. He then started playing with Legos (see Figure 24 & Figure 25). The child now used other materials, too, such papers, recycled boxes, sticks, and even foods, such as marshmallows and pretzel sticks.

He loves to build things. He enjoys it! For a science fair he is engaged here, in this picture in a project. This happened on January 2016… he ranked second there.

As I mentioned before, he just loves it. You know, Legos are teaching him so many skills… its just amazing to watch… I am not talking this with only mother’s emotion, truly I can identify the change, the improvement… its fun to watch how this little boy developing his skills!

Figure 24: Target child #2 enjoying building
Mother’s perceptions of her changing views of play

It is being a while we are here, in this country. Became parents here. Unknowingly we are influenced by this culture so many way… but certain core values remain same; the value of education.

My husband and I strongly value the importance of education in our children’s life. But that does not mean we will focus one and only in education, there are more… as child play is so important; so many ways it helps a child to grow. We learned it here. I mean in this country and we love to practice it in our children’s life as a parent.

( Participant mother #2, 04/17/16)

The mother explained her view of play in her child’s life with an example:
When he is playing with his Lego he is thinking freely, imagining and then applying it to build the structures. If I do not allow him to experience these trial and error methods of learning, I would think I am not doing my job as a parent properly. He got this opportunity to play as a child, and as a mother I must support him, encourage him.

(Participant mother #2, 04/17/16)

The mother was serious about her son’s play practices. She remembered that she and her husband had not been as playful with their older son as they were now with their second son, the target child. She said,

You need maturity before applying any approach, especially with your child and development… I think you are more cautious as a first-time parent.

We are more into play with our children than our mothers… play and awareness, besides physical activity, does not exist in India… parents are always under pressure to teach their children with text-based learning with best school, with best tutorial…so study hard, work hard for a bright future. With these beliefs, kids just do not have time for play. Because they do not have any choice to play, they must study to excel… too much pressure, you know, just too much!

I do not think I could do that anymore with our sons…both my husband and I feel as we are getting this opportunities, we must follow this path but with modification…

(Participant-mother #2, 04/17/16)

To understand the change in the mother’s perception of play more clearly, the researcher asked the mother how she would apply play if she had to go back to India and raise her child over there:

It will be tough to continue with these differences in India
It will not be a relaxed childhood there for him.

It is very competitive childhood in India. Nowadays, it is… I think too much force over there.
Kids go to after-school tutorial, which is another school. Addition to that they have private tutors…so when they will play? I do not see any play time for the young children in India.

Compare to that our kids has wonderful, relaxed childhood. They played or playing a lot, compared to the child in India. So if I go back I will try to balance it out, I have to be holistic… It will be extremely challenging, though…

Kids have challenges here too, especially among Asian immigrant children in New Jersey. In their early age, even in their early elementary school age parents are taking them to the tutorials. My husband and I decided not to follow that route.

Yes, I have changed, change to be flexible!

(Participant-mother #2, 04/17/16)

The mother is strongly indicated that her view of play had changed. Even, if she had to go back to India, she said, she would try to preserve her new practices. American culture had introduced her to a new teaching style through play; she saw that children were learning and developing different skills without any pressure, but rather in a relaxed and fun way as the mother suggested, “I would say, in their way.”

Summary

This case study reveals how participant mother #2 viewed play in a broader prospective. The mother stepped over the Indian cultural barrier, where education was considered the only way to be successful in life, and adopted the host culture’s playful early childhood practices. Participant mother #2 appreciated that play allowed her son to
learn more freely, rather than the traditional Indian approach. With a bicultural perspective the mother encouraged her son’s play in various ways.

Play activities helped the target child #2 to develop social skills through competing and performing in social events. There was evidence of play practice in various forms throughout the house, as well as mother #2’s involvement and support. Therefore, the researcher did not experience any discrepancy between the mother’s perceptions of play and play practices. The mother believed that the responsibility to provide opportunities and encouragements to the child lies with the parents.

Mother #2 also considered herself an “aware mother,” who practiced hard workmanship to accomplish goals in a traditional Indian way. However, through the experiences with her child’s play, she was able to see that her child was developing the same strengths, but in a more pleasurable way.

The observations helped the researcher identify the family’s encouragement of play for the target child, as well as mother’s active participation in the child’s play. This study noticed that the mother proudly acknowledged the influence of Indian culture in her childrearing style and did not want to compromise with her children’s education excellences. Yet, she also found her child was developing his motivation, concentration, and skills to face challenges through play, spontaneously. Therefore, both the parents of the target child #2’s wanted to continue to emphasize play with their children as long as it did not interfere with study patterns or grades.
Introducing participant-mother #3 (age: 46)

Participant-mother #3 was born and raised in India. After finishing college, she came to the U.S. as a successful graduate student from a respected engineering college in India and established herself as a professional. Her husband also came to the U.S. with the same academic status at the same time. Both of them had received job offers from a U.S. Company at the end of their third year of engineering college, in India. They pursued their careers and excelled in their professional lives. It had been 24 years since they moved to this country when the researcher met them. They were living in New Jersey with their two children, a 14-years-old boy and a 9-years-old girl. The 9-years-old girl is the target child in this study.

I was never an anti-play person, never in my life, more so than somebody in the Indian culture… being an only child taught me to play by myself and I used that opportunity all along.

But, you know our Indian culture’s norm, study, study, and study! There is no way parents will compromise play with study.

Being a professional parent’s daughter the expectation was really high. Not only from my parents but also from my family, you know Indian family; grandparents, uncle, aunty, everybody expected good grades, high scores … all those stuff from me… so mostly study during the week and weekends sometimes play… of course, all was related with my homework.

(Participant-mother #3, 3/20/16)
This chapter presents the case in terms of the following categories:

a) Mother’s own childhood play memories

b) Target child’s play activities and mother’s engagement in her child’s play

c) Mother’s childrearing goals

d) Target child’s activities that the participant-mother considers to be play

e) Observations of and interview with the target child

f) Notes from the weeklong diary about the target child’s play

g) The target child’s activities over time, as described by her mothers

h) Mother’s perceptions of their changing views of play

**Mother’s own childhood play memories**

Oh, no! I cannot draw! It will look so funny!
You said, stick figure would be okay too, right? Let me try

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

With a big laugh, the participant-mother #3 started to draw. She was trying to
draw a flower to represent the summertime, but after trying a couple of times
unsuccessfully, she asked the researcher for permission to write instead of draw. The
researcher recognized the mother’s discomfort and uneasiness, both of which were
interrupting the flow of conversation. Therefore, the researcher consented, making the
situation more relaxed. Participant-mother #3 then started to write and talk to the
researcher comfortably:
I was an only child, and my parent was working parent. They had a very busy and demanding work schedule. As I was growing up my Dida and Dadubhai (maternal grandparents) were actively involve in my life…all the playtime with friends, I had in my Dida’s place and all the pretend and indoor games I played at my parent’s house

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

Participant-mother #3 recalled her playful childhood memories (see Figure 26).

As a young child, she loved to play, and that interest in play persisted into the present, despite the mother’s busy schedule. Whenever she had the chance, she played with her husband and children. She and her husband enjoyed going to the tennis club to play with others as well. As an only child, she learned to play by herself: blocks, coloring, dress-up, and pretend-play, during which she pretended that she was a passenger of a pillow train with her imaginary friend Maya. All of her pretend-play was related to travelling by train. The mother belied her imaginary play style helped her to play all the time.

I was extremely involved in preened play with my imaginary friend… (with a laugh) actually, I had different shapes pillows in my room I used to line them up in my window seat and those were the compartments of my imaginary train and I had dolls and they were the passengers of that pillow train…I played with this train for long time.

My father loves to travel, and my mother and I were always looking forward to those surprises from my father. As we travelled mostly by train, I think that influenced my pretend play.

I loved Indian train journeys…I remember we used to travel for days in the train, so much fun!

In my play I was always a passenger with my doll children and my imaginary friend was my travel mate with her children.

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)
Figure 26: Drawing task by participant-mother #3; (03/17/16).

As the mother shared her childhood play memories, the researcher noticed a sense of excitement and joy spread over the mother’s face; it was very obvious that the mother
had enjoyed her playful childhood. During the weekdays, she did not have enough time to play because of her need to study but she still loved to talk to her imaginary friend. According to the mother, she would memorize facts/subject matter and practice it with her imaginary friend. She would also call on the imaginary friend for strength if she was in trouble. During the exam period, she received encouragement from her imaginary friend.

So, there was always play in my life as a child; happy time or sad time; study time or school time; inside the house or outside the house I was never alone … Maya was with me.

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

Participant-mother #3, told the researcher about the limitations of outdoor play at her parents’ house, because of the house’s geographical location. Their house was close to the main road, and there were no fields or parks close by to their house in which she could play. Her parents provided her with company whenever they could, acting as her reading “buddies” or board game partners. Sometimes she played board games with words or numbers with her parents. The mother loved to play with her with wooden blocks, too. For a long time, playing with friends happened only when she went to her grandparents’ house. Her grandparents lived in a gated community in Kolkata with lots of children her age. Since it was a protected housing complex, parents let their children play outside. There she used to play Choa-chui (tag), Kumir-Danga (crocodile and land), tennis, Skipping (jump-rope), etc. with her group of friends. The mother recalled that she
and the other children’s playtime was only in the afternoon, after their schoolwork was finished.

Even, school was closed, it is summer vacations, you would still have homework in India either from school or from parents or grandparents.

Mostly I stayed at Dida’s during the weekends, after exams, and summer vacations or whenever my school was closed.

So my playmates were all in my Dida’s housing complex…my parent’s house means school days and very structured and routine school days were for me; once a week I used to go the library with my mother to get or exchange my book and rest was my imaginary friend with or without pretend play

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

According to the mother, whether play was mostly by herself or with her friends depended on where she was staying. Because of her parents’ busy professional lives and her need to study, it was not common for her to play with her parents. She instead remembered her travels with them during the holidays.

My parents were very engaged with my study and homework. Does not matter how much tired they were at the end of the day or how busy they were throughout the day; both of them made sure that I am ready to go to school for the next day. That means did my homework and the concepts are clear for the chapters studied at school. It used to give me confidents. They were always there for me. Even, now I still consult with them so many things… it is important to have a strong support and encouragement from your family.

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)
The researcher did not see the target child during for almost the entire 90 minutes of the interview. When it was time for the researcher to leave, however, a little girl came into the living room with a fruit snack in her hand. After her mother introduced her to the researcher, she gave the fruit snack to the researcher for the trip home (the researcher had to drive 2:30 hours). The child was shy but very responsive to and respectful of the researcher.

**Target child’s play activities and mother’s engagement with her child’s play**

She got influenced by me, maybe. I used to encourage her to dress up and play when she was little, practically, I used to play with her… it was so much fun!

With my daughter’s play I became a kid again.

When she was born, I took a year off and then my parents came over to help. So, I had time to play with her during her early years.

During that time, I played a lot! I used to pretend that I am a horse and she used to ride on my back, or I used to pretend that I am a dancer and she would imitate me or my hands are a swing and the swing wants to give a ride to the baby…like that silly play you know…it was a great time!
Figure 27: The target child dancing while wearing an Indian outfit (participant-mother #3, 03/17/16).

Participant mother #3 loved to play and wanted her children to play, too, but only at certain times. The target child used to play with blocks, stuffed animals, dolls, and colored pencils. When the child was young, the mother had bought a sketchbook for her to practice the letters and shapes. According to the mother, “It was a nice combination of learning and playing.” While she described her daughter’s childhood play, she switched back and forth with her daughter and her own memories as well. According to the mother, when she was a child in India, she had limited play options. There were few resources and little encouragement. Ever since she was a little girl, the participant-mother realized that she had only one task: that is, to study, because if she studied hard she would have a happy life, like others in her family had had. She would also carry on the
family traditions. The mother said, “Study hard actually was not an option rather was a family custom. So, play was always secondary.”

After coming to the U. S. she gave birth to her first child. While she and her husband were raising their son, they became acquainted with the American culture of childhood play. As newcomers to the States, parents were too timid to fully embrace play. With the target child, however, they were using it more than they had for their first-born child. The parents were supporting and engaging their children in playful activities and had enrolled them in competitive sports like swimming and tennis. They were making play dates for the children with their friends, and the parents were playing with the children whenever time permitted.

The mother continued describing her daughter’s play practices (see Figure 27):

Nowadays she does not let me come to her room. Doors are always locked, when she plays. I know she is a teacher, I can hear her teaching, most of the time she is teaching her students...her students are her toys. In front of her window seat she would keep her easel and different colors dry-erase markers...sometimes teaching multiplications or something... maybe learned something from her school and practice that with her students. Exactly what I did with my imaginary friend She loves to go to school.

At our school we never play. We used to look forward when we will be going home and then we will play. I think we never pretend to play school because it was not a playful place in our childhood: school was where you study, give tests, compete with each others academically...all those... but not play, that is for sure...since little the schools in India stretch the child to the competition and stress...

But my daughter loves to go to school and loves to play school and loves to pretend that she is a teacher. I usually buy different color printing papers for our printer so that she can print out her teaching materials. I try to find online some practice worksheets according to her levels in different areas for her students...you know, the intention here, she
is teaching and at the same time learning and building her knowledge and at the same time building her self-reliance.

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

The target child loved to draw as well as loves to do crafts. She taught her pretend students through drawing and crafts, just as she was learning at school. According to the mother the target child was very interested in seasonal activities, and her play patterns reflected this. The mother was always careful to make sure that her daughter teaching supplies, so that her daughter as the pretend teacher could teach her pretend students.

I enjoy her seasonal consciousness. Accordingly, I provide the pretend teacher (the target child) her supplies and lessons ideas. Actually I love to do the crafts too.

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

The mother told the researcher that she guided her daughter’s pretend-play using different resources. The mother did not often actively participate in the play; rather, she honored her daughter’s privacy. Whenever the target child invited the mother to join in, however, the mother was glad to participate.

Participant-mother #3 described family play activities as primarily swimming and tennis. Since these activities were seasonal, they played board games, too. The target child played computer games with her older brother; and the siblings also loved to play electronic games together in their spare time. The children loved to teach their parents, too. The mother said:
We are learning from them as well. My husband and I enjoy that…

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

Participant-mother #3 was not in favor of electronic games, however. She believed playing outside was much better for the young children. The mother was aware of the technology-oriented world and wanted to adapt to it, but:

As a parents you have a role here; we have to guide them in the proper direction. We have to teach them what is for them and what is not for them

Play cannot be bad or good, what you are playing, how you are playing and when you are playing… all is interrelated to judge a play.

(Participant-mother #3, 03/17/16)

According to the mother, she and her husband were always there to support the children’s play opportunities and to provide resources for their children. They always tried to assess a play activity before introducing it to their children, however.

**Mother’s childrearing goals**

Education is my first priority; of course we cannot compromise with it. But after coming here, in this country we found to educate our children we can start a playful journey… as a child they can play and learn, develop different skills without any pressure …not just in theoretical way rather playful way… what a wonderful childhood!
So we want our children to have that childhood, what we did not have.

(Participant-mother #3, 03/20/16)

Participant-mother #3 described her goal with respect to American culture as having her children experience playful childhoods, compared to what they would have had in India. Because of India’s huge population and the competition among students, parents are pressured to prepare their children with good academic foundations beginning in the children’s early years. The experience that the mother had had in her childhood, as well as what the mother continued to observe when she visited India, was very different from the experiences of her childhood in the U.S.

Children are more relaxed here in U. S. than India during their early age but later I think it is same

(Participant-mother #3, 03/20/16)

The mother emphasized the importance of a playful childhood. As a mother, she wanted her children to be successful in their academic lives. She believed that a good education would secure her children’s futures. She also wanted her children to be good human beings. That is why she wanted to encourage them to do community service and help the neighbors.

The opportunities we did not get I wants to provide for them. You know, in India we have lots of helping hand. The cultural practices are very different than here.

So, we never learned to do anything, besides our study. However, our children
have to learn to do all these work to survive… but again, without compromising with study.

(Participant-mother #3, 3/20/16)

**Target child’s activities that the participant-mother considers to be play**

In our family, we play a lot… compared to other Indian family, who lives here, in New Jersey.

(Participant-mother #3, 04/17/16)

Since the parents of target child #3 loved sports and games, their children grew up in a playful environment. The mother encouraged her daughter in her pretend-play as a teacher and made sure she had enough supplies. Even though the parents had busy jobs with significant responsibilities, they made sure they were playing with their children on the weekends for at least some time, perhaps a few game of indoor table tennis.

Outdoor play is so seasonal …our family is flexible with indoor tennis or board game…they just love to play…
One hour or one and half hour will not hurt you in your forty-eight hours’ weekend. As long as you keep up with your schoolwork and your study, it is fine with my husband and I…
Although someday it is really hard for my son as he is in high school, but for my daughter it is just fine!

Also, there are days when weather is beautiful and I feel tired after work…feeling really lazy! Our son will come to me and will pull me out to play with them outdoor tennis, you know! We just love to play!

(Participant-mother #3, 04/17/16)
The family had a large play area in its basement with table tennis, pool tables, an electronic games area with a wall-mounted screen, blocks, stuffed animals, dolls, and other various kinds of toys. In the living room, the researcher observed an open wooden basket with different kinds of cards. The target child’s room also had many play activities, with dolls by the window seat and in the open space, and in the corners, different color markers and craft materials with a few finished and unfinished artworks. The house had a backyard with basketball hoop and tennis net. Overall, there appeared to be many sections in the house where this family played and encouraged the children to play.

Observations of and interview with target child #3

Observations suggested that this family truly encouraged play. During the observations, the researcher did not have the opportunity to talk to the child because she was very shy. The observation was done on Wednesday, April 13th, at 4:00 pm, a day that the participant-mother worked from home. The mother had brought the child home from the school. After the child had had a snack and had talked to her mother about school and exchanged a few smiles with the researcher, it was the time for the child to finish her homework. She had a project due the next day, and this took a little more than one hours to finish. After finishing the project, the child started to play a dress-up game on her iPad. This game allowed her to ‘buy’ clothes and putting them on the figure. The game limits the money available to the child, so the child first has to determine whether she has
enough money to buy the outfit. Only if she can make a perfectly matched outfit can she
move to the next level. The child said that she loved this dress-up game, but the most
favorite game is:

Be a teacher game… I love it… I play it in my room …I love to play with my
friends too …playing with my parents is fun…specially with dada
When I will be older, like mom, I want to be a teacher…it is so much fun to be a
teacher! You can have a closet full of different colors pens, pencils, papers, other
crafts materials…teachers can wear beautiful dresses! Do you know Mrs. K? She
is so nice! I want to be like her when I will grow-up

(Participant-child 2, 04/13/16)

Notes from the weeklong diary about the target child #3’s play:

The weeklong diary of the target child showed that this family encouraged play,
as the child played throughout the week either inside, or outside, or both, except on
Tuesday because she had an art class. After her art lesson, the target child played pretend;
she pretended she was a teacher for an hour before going to bed. On Sunday the child had
a playdate; she also played pretend for two hours. During her pretend-play, she taught her
class painting; the topic was spring. The students had to create spring pictures on their
easels. The mother acted as a student alongside the child’s doll students.

The observations helped the researcher identify the family’s encouragement of
play for the target child, as well as the mother’s active participation in the child’s play.
The mother was typically either a student in the target child’s pretend-play, was playing
outdoor games with her, or providing some play ideas during the child’s playdates. The
father also participated alongside the child in her outdoor play or in the down stairs games, but he did not participate as actively in the pretend-play of teaching.

The target child’s activities over time, as described by her mother

Participant-mother #3 had previously told the researcher that she probably did not have many pictures of her daughter playing, since the daughter did not let her parents take pictures of her while she was playing. Ever since the target child was little, she cried if she found out that her parents were taking pictures of her. As a result, the parents learned to enjoy watching their daughter’s play or they played with her without taking pictures. As the target child is got older, “Things are little better!” the mother said. The mother shared a few pictures of the daughter’s activities in recent years. She showed a picture of the child’s play area (see Figure 28)

As I mentioned, our daughter loves to pretend as a schoolteacher. This is her most favorite area in the house. It is in the basement, and this is her working station with her pretend students. She will bring her students; you know, her dolls, stuffed animals… in the craft area and will do the craft and teach them how to make things or will do the project, that she gave to her student or just do the painting…you know, whatever she thinks she will teach her students on that day.
The target child loved to play tennis, too, the mother mentioned as she looked at the provided picture (see Figure 29). Ever since the girl was little, she was exposed to tennis. The parents were involved in this sport, and later she saw her brother play it, too. The mother believed watching her family play tennis might have caused the child to develop her interest in tennis, too.

**Figure 28:** Target child #3’s favorite play area: her pretend students’ project area

**Figure 29:** Target child #3 enjoying tennis in the play area of her basement

The researcher was invited into the target child’s room (see Figure 30), but the target child did not allow her was not allowed to take the picture of the teaching area of
the room. The room was beautiful and well-organized. The mother and the researcher honored the child’s privacy, and the researcher only took the picture of the opposite, non-teaching, side of the room.

**Figure 30:** Target child #3’s bedroom

The mother said that in addition to teaching, the child loved to dance to music (see figure 31). In the house there was a designated area in which the child was allowed to explore the music and movement. Whenever she danced, the child wanted to be all by herself. Sometimes when friends come over, the child danced with them, but not all the time, the mother said. The mother added that the child enjoyed watching her friends dance and would clap or giggles but would not join them on the floor.

She is our shy baby!
As long as she is enjoying it, it does not matter.
I encourage her to dance, too… it is a wonderful exercise not only for your body but your mind, too… It is a playful way a child can develop her different skills:
coordination, balance, musical mind, imagination, and of course, child’s physical movement.

Figure 31: Target child #3 dancing to music in the designated area

The mother described the child’s reading habits over time. The mother said that reading was something that developed very naturally with her children as they were growing up. Her children preferred to read “real books” not electronic books (see Figure 32). That was why the family went to the library or bought books. Every summer the family donated the books to the library. Reading was a family habit that started when the children were little.

Maybe they saw us reading…that perhaps helps to form this reading habit
You know, they never ask for screen in the car. Since they are little, we had a book bag for our travel. We read for long travel, sing-a-long, and talk…lots of talking…
I think, you have to teach when they are little with your own practices… children learn from their parents a lot, don’t you agree?

**Figure 32:** Target child #3 reading in the study area of the home

**Mother’s perceptions of her changing views of play**

Only study may make you intelligent by overall but not perceptible…there are more to consider

(Participant-mother #2, 04/17/16)
When the researcher asked participant-mother #3 about her perception of how her view of play had changed, she answered:

I love to play, as I mentioned before…that is why this culture influences me faster/quicker than my other Indian friends.

I just love this cultural idea of encouraging play…you can do so many things with play, in another words, develop so many skills through play in the early age.

I definitely agree that it has an influence on me. I thought it is a great opportunity for my children too…I want to continue this practices

(Participant-mother #3, 04/17/16)

The mother described her adaptation of this cultural practice of play. Initially she and her husband were not sure how to proceed with this cultural practice, especially with their son, their first-born child: “all was new then; new country, new system, and new parenting.” As participant-mother #3 previously mentioned, in India she never experienced playful childhood. Accordingly, it was a great revelation for these new parents that not only in the community but also in the school, there was “all fun and playful learning, not like our childhood in India, memorizing...yes, even preschool age.” The parents tried to follow the Indian style of childrearing with their first-born child prioritizing study and teaching-based parenting through the use of all educational toys:

We bought toys only to teach him writing, counting, and reading…we did not bought Play-doh or hand paints for him. We were afraid …what will happen if he swallow… never let him run under a sprinkler or play with mud or get her dirty…always “what if” were there.

I have to tell you the funny story here: I was so scared, and did not let him use even child scissor because he will cut his baby fingers, so no craft for him. If there
was any, I did the cutting part. But when he started do bring his works from his school ... all the craft or learning he did throughout the day with cutting and pasting, I was so mad to write a letter to the school regarding the safety but soon met with our neighbor and got the assurance as these scissors are made for the children and will not cut his fingers... you know all were new then and we were hesitant…

We were also learning with him, FUN-PLAY-LEARN culture

(Participant-mother #3, 04/17/16)

During the conversation, participant-mother #3 told the researcher that she and her husband’s parenting style had come more adaptive. With their second child, the parents were more adventures and playful. They enjoyed their daughter’s playful learning. The mother let her child explore nature with her bare feet, get dirty using mud or foam, and be creative with crafts or Play-doh. The mother also encouraged her to be imaginative and engage in pretend-play.

Participant-mother #3 had realized that a child could learn through play without any pressure or stress. She let her children participate in organized sports. She saw that her children were learning through these group events; they were not wasting their time. They were learning to be organized and balancing education and play through the group sports. The mother considered play not as a distraction from study or as a detriment to her children’s grades, but as an activity that taught the children how to stay focused.

I want to continue their play as long as I can, but if there any point I feel that it is disturbing their study, I have to stop.

You cannot compromise with your child’s study, right?

(Participant-mother #3, 04/17/16)
Yet, what if the mother had to go back to India and raise her children over there? When the researcher asked this question, the mother looked at the researcher with a big smile:

Then I have to face a big challenge!

I love sports, which are my internal characteristics. But in India, I am not sure how can I pursue my children to play, like they do play here.

There are not so much opportunities of play in India. So my children will not have the scope or options like here if I take them there in India.

Moreover, nobody will encourage you to take your child to play. You know, in India the cultural norm is better study than play, as play will not bring a bright future for you, but if you study hard you will experience a better life.

It is not easy to break the belief as well as practices if I go back to India.

(Participant-mother #3, 04/17/16)

Participant-mother #3 truly believed in the power of play: socially, physically, and academically. When a child does not feel stress or pressure from his or her the teacher or parents the child develops skills with friends or by him- or herself in a pleasurable way. The mother cultivated this view of play in the U.S. As a child, she had practiced play for physical activity and pleasure, but she never realized all the benefits of play. The mother also said that even her parents had not considered the benefits; they considered play as
fun. The mother hoped to continue play in her children’s life even if she had to move back to India or in the States.

Summary

Observations suggested that this family truly encouraged play. The data showed that participant mother #3’s views of play have changed as a result of being an immigrant, as she has been able to understand her children’s innate abilities and independent skill development. With her first child, mother #3’s realized that play is not limited to physical activities. Thus, she was more determined to raise her second child in a more playful way. The encouraging environment of this host culture allowed the mother to be supportive and enthusiastic in order to continue her daughter’s play based early childhood.

The interviews and observations helped the researcher identify the family’s encouragement of play for the target child, as well as mother #3’s active participation in the child’s play. The mother did not consider academic achievement over play and did not believe that anything can come into conflict with studying. Mother #3 prioritized formal studying over play, similar to the high emphasis of early childhood education seen in Indian culture. At the same time, the participant mother valued the flexibility of teaching and learning through play. Therefore, there was an importance given to play, yet only following studying and given that it was a weekend or holiday. Thus, there was no tension or argument with the child’s play and play-like activities with mother’s child rearing goals. Instead, mother #3 was continuously supporting her daughter’s play with
active participation, with different resources to stimulate her with ideas, and engagements to sustain her daughter’s creativities, and motivation.
Chapter Seven

Summary of Data Analysis

The primary aim of this study is to investigate how traditional Indian culture manifests itself in the social setting of the United States (U.S.), paying particular attention to play activities, as well as understandings of play, from Indian immigrant mothers’ perspectives. More specifically, this dissertation considers how Indian immigrant mothers describe their parenting goals and practices, as well as how play in its various forms may relate to the mothers’ childrearing goals. In this chapter, the summaries of the results of the data analysis are presented.

This chapter considers the three cases in the following categories (as they are presented and analyzed in the previous three chapters): the mothers’ own childhood play memories; the target children’s play activities and the mothers’ engagement in the children’s play; the mothers’ childrearing goals; the target children’s activities that the participant-mothers consider to be play; observations of and interviews with the target children; notes from the one-week diaries about the target children’s play; the target children’s activities over time, as described by their mothers; and finally, the mothers’ perceptions of their changing views of play.

Because human development is a “cultural process” (Rogoff, 2003), cultural customs and practices can be said to shift over time due to different circumstances that emerge. Geographical change, generational idea shifts, and the imposition of views from outside may all reform cultural norms, practices, and beliefs. To help explain these types of cultural shifts, Berry (1997) has proposed a model of acculturation. Acculturation
describes how individuals retain their traditional cultures when exposed to the beliefs and practices of other cultures. A gradual process, acculturation begun with these participant mothers when they were exposed to new cultural experiences and adopted the beliefs and behaviors of the host culture without abandoning their culture of origin. All three immigrant-mothers strongly suggested that their views of play had changed since arriving in the U.S., as they were learning a great deal from their time in the country. American culture had introduced them to a new learning style that was predicated on play.

More specifically, all three-immigrant mothers agreed that their children were learning and developing different skills without any pressure in this culture, experiences that the mothers themselves had never had (see Table 2). Indian parents generally prioritize education over play, preferring to substitute studying for playtime if needed. Parmer, Harkness, and Super (2004) affirm this as the focus of Indian parenting, arguing that, “Asian parents stress the idea that getting a head start in early academics is important for the cognitive development of children in the preschool years” (p. 102) Therefore, learning through play was never encouraged in the immigrant mothers’ early childhood years.

It had been found by the participant mothers that most American parents have positive views of play. All three mothers had found that in the U.S., academic and athletic activities were regarded as complementary activities that help to stimulate the mind and body. Sports and clubs alike are considered pathways to friends, stress relief, and unique experiences. Parmer, Harkness, & Super (2004) confirm this, stating that “Euro American parents were found to believe that play is an important vehicle for early development, while the Asian parents saw little developmental value in it” (p. 97).
Table 2: Mothers’ own childhood play memories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant-mother</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Played with</td>
<td>Dolls, kitchen utensils, drawing, reading, pretend play</td>
<td>Dolls, reading</td>
<td>Dolls, blocks, imaginary, dress up, and pretend play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In her early age</td>
<td>Played educational games: with rhymes, addition and subtraction</td>
<td>Played educational games: with rhymes, addition and subtraction</td>
<td>Played educational games: with rhymes, addition and subtraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with grandparents</td>
<td>with parents</td>
<td>with grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played mostly</td>
<td>During summer vacations, on weekends, and on holidays</td>
<td>During summer vacations, on weekends, and on holidays</td>
<td>During summer vacations, on weekends, and on holidays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Studying was the priority, not play</td>
<td>Studying was the priority, not play</td>
<td>Studying was the priority, not play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot remember/remember</td>
<td>Cannot remember whether played with mother or father</td>
<td>Remember played with mother or father</td>
<td>Cannot remember whether played with mother or father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to</td>
<td>Finish study first then play</td>
<td>Finish study first then play</td>
<td>Finish study first then play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played only</td>
<td>On the weekends or summer time with friends</td>
<td>On the weekends or summer time with friends</td>
<td>On the weekends or summer time with friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The degree to which the mothers were able to enact their evolving understandings of play differed over time. With their first-born children, the mothers had tried to put their new understandings into practice, seeing play as that which could be used for purposes other than physical development or fun; yet they often struggled with this goal.
With their second children, however, the mothers truly became more adventures and playful (see Table 3). All three families encouraged play for the target children, and the mothers actively participated in their children’s play.

**Table 3: Target children’s childhood play practices as described by the mothers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target child</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Played with</td>
<td>Doll, stuffed animals, blocks, electronic games, pretend play, drawing, reading</td>
<td>Cars, toy animals, blocks, electronic games, Legos, acting, coloring, reading</td>
<td>Doll, stuffed animals, blocks, electronic games, pretend play, dress-up, coloring, reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents play</td>
<td>With her</td>
<td>With him</td>
<td>With her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play with</td>
<td>Friends on playdates</td>
<td>Friends on playdates</td>
<td>Friends on playdates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic games</td>
<td>With older sibling</td>
<td>With older sibling</td>
<td>With older sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family games</td>
<td>Puzzles, reading, mother-daughter drawing</td>
<td>Puzzles, board games, swimming, bike riding</td>
<td>Swimming, tennis, flash cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite activities</td>
<td>Creative writing, drawing</td>
<td>Legos</td>
<td>Pretend play (teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoys</td>
<td>Music and making movies</td>
<td>Music and acting in play</td>
<td>Music and dancing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study highlights the play activities of writing stories and competing with others, building structures with Legos and facing challenges through practice and
competition, and pretending as a teacher with supplies provided by the mothers. All three mothers found these play/play-like activities to be among their children’s favorites. The mothers noticed that these activities allowed their children to face challenges and develop their skills without any pressure. All three mothers agreed that through their play activities, their children were becoming more focused, developing their thinking abilities, and becoming more imaginative and creative. In environment in which play is considered as a self-constructed developmental tool, Elkind (2008) states, children are able to “create new learning experiences, and these self-created experiences enable them to acquire social, emotional, and intellectual skills they could not acquire in any other way” (p. 7).

The immigrant-mothers believed that it was their responsibility to provide opportunities and encouragement for the children to do what they loved. Thus, all three mothers monitored and actively participated in their children’s play. Despite their busy professional lives, the mothers prioritized their children’s play practices and supported their children’s play in many ways as facilitators (see Table 4). It became clear that all three participant-mothers took the opportunities that this country provides to nourish their children’s playful creativity through writing/drawing, building with Legos, and pretend-play.

They also view their role in play as important. Researchers believe that “[m]any parents have a knack for providing children with appropriately challenging play experiences that nudge children to the next level of development (e.g., Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development)” (p. 184). Though this association among play, learning, and parental involvement were ideal situations for these three cases.
Table 4: Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Monitoring child’s play all the time</td>
<td>Monitoring child’s play most of the time</td>
<td>Monitoring child’s play most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports</td>
<td>Providing resources</td>
<td>Providing resources</td>
<td>Providing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagements</td>
<td>Encouraging and prefers to play with her</td>
<td>Encouraging and prefers to play with him</td>
<td>Encouraging and prefers to play with her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, Indian parents’ desire for their children’s academic success is driven by a traditional mindset. Children are expected to do as well in school as they possibly can, as education is highly respected in Indian society. Parents push academic learning rather than the development of the imagination and innovation through play, at an early age. Play is generally considered a waste of time and energy in India (Malayankandy, 2014). According to Roopnarine and Gol-Guven (2016), “There is a high premium placed on educational achievement (gaan or knowledge) at the local and societal levels in India. The Vedas outline the importance of education and suggest that learning and acquisition of knowledge begins in childhood (Balya)” (p. 262). This is common in Indian culture.

Yet these immigrant mothers went further than most Indian parents; they also stressed the importance of raising their children to be good human beings and teaching them respect for self as well as others. The mothers saw these aspects of personality as developing from education. They believed that education brings well-roundedness to
humans’ mind and actions, and it thus cannot be compromised (see Table 5). As the mothers noted, they were not deeply concerned about educational achievement in their children’s early years, but as the children grew older, the immigrant-mothers would have to begin to emphasize educational achievement to their children to secure the children’s futures. Therefore, these participant mothers might have to tailor their children’s play activities to suit the children’s academic needs and demands. If their children can ultimately balance both education and play (competitive sports in high school), the mothers will consider this a significant achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant-mother</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Education is the first Priority; it will help her to become a well-rounded person</td>
<td>Education is the first Priority; it will help him to become a well-rounded person</td>
<td>Education is the first Priority; it will help her to become a well-rounded person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Her future with education</td>
<td>His future with education</td>
<td>Her future with education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach</td>
<td>Her to work hard, practice and learn</td>
<td>Him to work hard, practice and learn</td>
<td>Her to work hard, practice and learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting play</td>
<td>Try to assist and encourage her but before that, will find out the benefit of that play</td>
<td>Encourage him to play but before that, will find out the benefit of that play</td>
<td>Wants to continue the play and playful childhood but focusing on benefit of that play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To become</td>
<td>A global citizen and to respect herself and others</td>
<td>A good human being and to respect himself and others</td>
<td>To respect herself and others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The immigrant-mothers did not consider academic achievement over play or any conflict between study and play. They proudly acknowledged the influence of Indian culture in their childrearing style and did not want to compromise with their children’s education excellences. Yet, they also found that their children were merging their motivation, concentration, and skills to face challenges through play, spontaneously. Instead of separating play and learning, they used play as a reward to increase children’s motivation for learning or as a way to help children reach the next stage of learning. As a result, the immigrant-mothers valued the flexibility of teaching and learning through play, as this country proposed and in which they never exposed as a child. Study has reported that play does not compete with academic learning but actually enables children to learn “play and learning are dimensions that stimulate each other and could be seen as an indivisible entirety, which is a part of children’s experiencing, and which helps them create an understanding world in a lifelong process” (Samuelsson & Johansson, 2006, p.47).

Despite of their busy professional life, the immigrant-mothers actively engaged with their children’s play and play like activities as a “facilitator.” The perspective of valuing play as a vehicle for learning was highly emphasized in the immigrant-mothers’ responses. All three participant mothers especially respected the Indian parenting style; parental support, guidance, and engagement, but with a few moderations (see Table 6). Through the opportunities present to them, the participant mothers were able to nourish their children’s play by encouraging their interest in writing, building with Legos, and pretended play as teacher. Since the children truly enjoyed this activity, the mothers encouraged them in many different ways. With the introduction of competitions and other
resources, all three participant mothers were able to stimulate their children by helping them further develop their creativity, motivate new ideas, and create the autonomy for free thinking.

Table 6: How the mothers expressed their changed perceptions of play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant-mother</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likes</td>
<td>To teach her through play</td>
<td>To teach him through play</td>
<td>To teach her through play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants</td>
<td>Her to play</td>
<td>Him to play</td>
<td>Her to play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages</td>
<td>Play but researches first and then</td>
<td>Play but finds the resources and outcome, then plays</td>
<td>Play but helps her to find a game and finds the outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds time to</td>
<td>Monitor the play</td>
<td>Monitor the play</td>
<td>Monitor the play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes sure</td>
<td>She is learning</td>
<td>She is learning</td>
<td>She is learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes initiative</td>
<td>To arrange a playdate with conscientiousness</td>
<td>To arrange a playdate with conscientiousness</td>
<td>To arrange a playdate with conscientiousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family plays</td>
<td>Together (when time permits)</td>
<td>Together (when time permits)</td>
<td>Together (when time permits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages</td>
<td>Her child to join in school sports and different games</td>
<td>Her child to join in school sports and different games</td>
<td>Her child to join in school sports and different games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing</td>
<td>Playful early childhood</td>
<td>Playful early childhood</td>
<td>Playful early childhood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research suggests (Cote & Bornstein, 2005) that immigrant-mothers’ inclination is to retain their own cultural beliefs upon migration but to gradually reshape their beliefs and thoughts. This applies to immigrant mothers’ understandings of play, too. Given that ethnic identity influences an individual’s beliefs, values, and practices, Indian immigrant mothers’ ethnic identity got also influenced by their host culture.

Thus, there was no tension or argument with the child’s play and play like activities with mothers’ child rearing goals. Instead, this study found that the participant mothers were continuously supporting their children’s play with their active participation to sustain their skills. Flexibility of teaching and learning with play in the host culture not only help them to re shape their perception of play, the changes have occurred in response to target children’s influences as well as the influences of spouses, older siblings, and peers as conduits for general cultural adaptation and assimilation regarding play (see Table 7). As a result, the immigrant-mothers begun to consider that through play, children can create new learning experiences all by themselves.
Table 7: What helped the mothers to change their perceptions of play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Participant-mother #1</th>
<th>Participant-mother #2</th>
<th>Participant-mother #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The changes have occurred because of</td>
<td>This country</td>
<td>This country</td>
<td>This country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help them to re shape their perception of play</td>
<td>Flexibility of teaching and learning with play</td>
<td>Flexibility of teaching and learning with play</td>
<td>Flexibility of teaching and learning with play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged by</td>
<td>Variety of resources</td>
<td>Variety of resources</td>
<td>Variety of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirations from</td>
<td>Encouraging society Supportive community Inspiring environment</td>
<td>Encouraging society Supportive community Inspiring environment</td>
<td>Encouraging society Supportive community Inspiring environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduced by</td>
<td>Older son</td>
<td>Older son</td>
<td>Older son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence and encouragement</td>
<td>Husband is supportive and engaged with these different ideas</td>
<td>Husband is supportive and engaged with these different ideas</td>
<td>Husband is supportive and engaged with these different ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help to consider the new cultural experiences</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All three immigrant-mothers indicated, that their first priority for their children was education. The mothers considered play not as a distraction from study or as a detriment to her children’s grades, but as an activity that taught the children how to stay focused. As the mothers are more and more immersed in the dominant culture, play’s importance in family life and in children’s development and learning became more
apparent to them. By way of the opportunities and influences from the dominant culture these immigrant mothers came to view play as a valuable experience in early childhood and consequently encouraged their children to engage in play. Moreover, all three families’ houses showed evidence of where these families played and encouraged their children to play. All three participant-mothers agreed that even if they had to return to India, they would try to preserve their new practices, keeping learning through play as their childrearing style.
Chapter Eight

Discussion and Conclusion

The primary aims of this dissertation are to investigate in-depth three Indian immigrant mothers’ changed beliefs about play, as well as their perceptions of those changes. To probe the relationship between the mothers’ actual engagement with play in their children’s early years, as well as their perceptions, and to document the mothers’ parenting goals and how play intersected with those goals, this study investigated the following research questions:

1. How did the Indian immigrant mothers describe their parenting goals and practices, and how did play, and different kinds of play, relate to these childrearing goals?
2. How did the mothers think their beliefs about play may have changed?
3. What they think about these changes?
4. How did they present the changes?

The study findings indicate that, on the whole, the participating immigrant Indian mothers primarily saw play as a tool to stimulate and increase children’s learning and development. The mothers saw play and learning as integrated in specific play activities, but mostly they tended to focus on the children’s learning outcomes rather than just play. Accordingly, these immigrant mothers valuing play and offering a variety of ways to support and enhance children’s playful learning.

Bredikyte and Hakkarainen (2011) have argued though children can gain certain skills more easily in play, learning should not be viewed as the primary objective of play.
Therefore, perhaps the immigrant Indian mothers’ focus on learning through play may restrict their comprehension of the genuine significance of children's play. Ryan and Northey-Berg (2014) have argued “the focus on the impact of play on children’s learning and development…overlooks the way that play creates a space for development” (p. 210). Therefore, there is a tendency for parents to value only certain types of play, not play in general, just as the mothers in this study emphasized play activities such as reading, building with Legos, or pretend-play, characterizing them as ways of “learning,” “developing skills,” or a way to “meet[ing] certain goals.” Of course, the mothers in this study sincerely believed in the importance of play in stimulating children’s development and they sought to improve the quality of play for their children. The immigrant-mothers also were sensitive to how their responses to their children’s play would enhance and enrich what the children were already doing. Therefore, while the immigrant-mothers may not have grasped what scholars have identified as original or authentic play, they did develop their conceptions of play and use of those developed concepts of play to maximize their children’s learning by guiding their children along their developmental pathways.

Overall, immigration has helped the mothers to consider play in their children’s lives, especially during the early childhood years. The children were practicing play with the mothers’ guidance, participation, and supervision. The mothers were actively engaged in their children’s play practices as facilitators, and they were continuously trying to improve their children’s skills through play/play-like activities. Yet the mothers still considered their own Indian identities, believing that studying hard would lead to a stable life with a stable career (in other words, success). As a result, in their opinions, education
was the first priority. Play was part of the immigrant mothers’ parenting styles, but it was mainly a tool for helping their children to accomplish goals in the primary grades and perchance later in their children’s lives, as long as it did not interfere with their children’s study and academic achievement. All three mothers highlighted education as necessary for becoming a “global citizen.” For example;

I give my children dreams - dreams of having a rich life, dreams to become a world citizen, dreams to create a legacy. I believe without dreams one ceases to exist.

(Participant-mother #1, 03/28/16)

You may have great idea or thinking but to establish that you need a solid foundation and to build that foundation you have to study…. you have to work hard

(Participant-mother #1, 03/19/16)

These immigrant mothers went further than most Indian parents; they also stressed the importance of raising their children to be good human beings and teaching them respect for self as well as others. The mothers saw these aspects of personality as developing from education. They believed that education brings well roundedness to humans’ mind and actions, and it thus cannot be compromised (see Table 5). Yet the mothers were proud of their heritage and culture and wanted to educate their children with that in mind. Therefore, the children’s own developmental experiences and learning initiatives were prioritized by the immigrant Indian mothers in the early years, but an emphasis on academic achievement was likely to be encouraged in the children’s later years.
In the following chapter, an overview of the study, mothers’ perceptions of the
different views (that they now have) of play, implications, the study’s strengths and
weaknesses, its limitations, and recommendations for further research are presented.

**Study overview**

Recognizing the immigrant population’s tendency towards cultural assimilation,
this study considers the beliefs regarding play held by three middle- to upper-middle
class Asian-Indian American mothers, a group that has seen steady academic and
economic achievement in India as well as in the U.S. To achieve this success, the group
has had to follow the path of the traditional Indian cultural practices that prioritize
educational engagements over play beginning in early childhood. As immigrants in the
U.S., however, this group of mothers is experiencing and being influenced by the
dominant culture. The U.S. educational system recognizes the value of play, and in
particular, taking turns, sharing, imitating, competing, arguing, and reasoning, in
allowing children to develop their social, emotional, and intellectual abilities. As the
mothers have become more and more immersed in the dominant culture, play’s
importance in family life and in children’s development and learning have become more
apparent to them; in other words, the mothers have begun to see play in a different light.

For these immigrant Asian-Indian mothers, traditional Indian parenting practices
have necessitated adjustment upon migration to the U.S., allowing play to filter into long-
held educational values. By way of the opportunities and influences from the dominant
culture, these immigrant mothers have learned to view play as a valuable experience for
children in their early years. The mothers have consequently encouraged their children to engage in play. The mothers have started to consider that through play, children can create new learning experiences all by themselves. On the other hand, the mothers remain steadfast in their view that intellectual and academic achievements are more important than play, as suggested by traditional Indian cultural practices. Therefore, due to the significant cultural shift and in order to balance play with academic excellence, mothers find that they must modify their views and beliefs about play and implement these customized views in their childrearing practices.

Mothers’ perceptions of the different views of play that they developed

In India, parents play an integral role in their children’s early educational experiences. Parents tend to resist the idea that play is an important psychological activity that can go hand-in-hand with children’s development and learning. This means that in India, mothers’ involvement in children’s play, whether spontaneous or arranged, always includes an additional objective: e.g., to feed, teach, or guide their children in specific ways. In Indian, parents believe children play regardless of whether the parents encourage it, and therefore developments through playful activities are undermined (Chaudhary & Shukla, 2014). The strong traditional Indian cultural belief is that it is the primary responsibility of parents is to encourage their children’s academic success, as education is considered the only path to a stable and successful future. Instead of allowing their children to play, parents push for their children’s early academic exposure, which they believe will lead to intellectual development. Because education, not play, is
considered the pathway to achievement, children are taught from a young age that good grades and a strong work ethic are necessary to develop. This means that there is significant parental involvement in the children’s lives in India. Research has found that Asian families expect their children to do well academically, to obey authority figures, and to imitate the strong work ethic that their parents model (Parmer, Harkness, & Super, 2004).

Human development is a “cultural process,” but cultural traditions and practices may shift due to different conditions (Rogoff, 2003). More specifically, geographical repositioning, generational shifts in ideals, and the imposition of views from other cultures may cause changes. Therefore, this study suggests that for the immigrant mothers, play may intersect with the immigration process in order to influence traditional Indian parenting practices. Adopting the lens of the development niche model (Harkness & Super, 1986), this study considers how these immigrant Indian mothers’ cultural beliefs have been modified through exposure to the customs of their host culture, as well as the effects of this host culture on the mothers’ views and practices of play.

The immigrant Indian mothers believe it is necessary that they pass on to their children the emphasis on academic achievement that they have inherited from their parents. Yet they have abandoned certain practices, such as extended routine homework schedules for elementary-age children. According to the data collected for this study, all three mothers were exposed to play-based early childhood practices while in the U. S.; from their children’s schools to their communities, the mothers have seen and experienced how play has been practiced and encouraged by this dominant culture. These experiences were new to the mothers. All three immigrant-mothers now understand the
value of playful learning in early childhood much more clearly than they did when they were in India or even when they first arrived in the U.S. and raised their first-born children. The reason for this, the mothers suggest, is that as newcomers to a foreign country as well as first-time mothers, they lacked exposure and experience, and were perhaps overwhelmed with the thought of jeopardizing their children’s future with the notion of introducing a foreign concept like play into their children’s lives. Born and raised in a society where education is the first priority in a child’s life, play was a confusing practice for the mothers, as well as their husbands, at the beginning. Soon, though, the new mothers learned of the strong supports the American culture provided for play in early childhood; therefore, all three mothers became able to associate play with educational and developmental value. The mothers now feel excited and encouraged to incorporate playful activities into their children’s lives. Therefore, for these immigrant Indian mothers, play is no longer only for physical fitness or recreation (the belief they grew up with in their native culture); it now is recognized as having more to offer, helping children to be creative, and imaginative. These immigrant Indian mothers are witnessing growth in their children’s motivation, concentration, and confidence as a result of play. This reinforces the parents’ drive to not only encourage their children to engage in play, but also to engage themselves as play partners with their children.

The study highlights the mothers’ active participation in their children’s play practices. The mothers believe children need support and encouragement as well as proper guidance from their parents in every aspect. This means that the mothers provide appropriate tools to practice play activities and help their children achieve their goals. While the mothers did not experience play in this way in their own childhoods, they have
learned from their own parents the importance of providing children with support, encouragement, and active participation. Indian parents’ sacrifices for their children’s comfort and support, as well as their wishes for their children to emerge ‘better than us,’ are ingrained in the culture, and education is seen as the only pathway to this outcome (Chaudhary, 2013). In the U.S., the Indian immigrant mothers are actively adhering to their native cultural traditions, but with adaptations. As the host culture highlights play’s importance in early childhood, the mothers are feeling privileged (to have this opportunities) and more alert to the necessity of building their children’s strong foundations not only through academics but also with play. That is why the mothers are eager to make time to play with their children, despite their oftentimes busy professional lives. The mothers believe that their active participation keeps their children motivated and encouraged.

Besides participating in their children’s play, the mothers also monitor and assess their children’s skills through play. The mothers in this study suggest that they feel that it is their responsibility as mothers to maximize their children’s learning by guiding the children along through their developmental pathways. As Vygotsky (1956) stresses:

[I]nstruction is good only when it proceeds ahead of development. It then awakens and rouses to life those functions which are in a stage of maturing, which lie in the Zone of proximal development. It is in this way that instruction plays an extremely important role in development (p. 278, as cited in Berk & Winser, 1995, p. 106).

Therefore, these immigrant mothers’ monitoring, provision of learning elements, and participation in their children’s play helps facilitate their children’s expanded
understandings, as well as movement into advanced stages of development. As an example, the participant-mothers consider story-writing, drawing, reading, building with Legos, and pretend-play as among their children’s favorite play activities. Therefore, the mothers consciously try to help the children to excel at these activities by providing them with multiple resources. They provide different challenges with practice sources and take them to the competitions, preparing them for the competitions with extended hours of practice. The children said that they enjoy this practice and feel accomplished (during the observations). This study did not reveal any tension or argument between the mothers and children during the children’s play or play-like activities. All these activities were smooth, spontaneous, and initiated by the target children.

Throughout the observations, the researcher noticed the encouraging playful environment in the houses. All three houses had multiple play areas. These play areas were not restricted to the children’s bedrooms; rather, they were spread through the houses in various ways: puzzles, magazines, and books were strewn throughout the study areas (the mothers considered reading to be play); there were easels with colors and craft materials in the basements and bedrooms (one of the children pretended to be a teacher and taught her pretend students with arts and crafts, or drew her story to teach her students); Legos covered the floor of one of the children’s bedrooms and the corner of the family room; board games, cards, and dominos were in the living rooms; and writing tablets or laptops were in the bedrooms. The study areas depended on the day and time the researcher visited the houses. There were also finished basements with different kinds of play opportunities (e.g., dolls, cars, blocks, Wii and other electronic games), and outdoor play areas with trampolines, basketball hoops, tennis courts, and pools.
Importantly, the daily diaries the mothers kept for a week show that all three children engaged only in their favorite play activities during the whole week and sustained their play-like activity, reading all seven days for different amounts of time. Moreover, the weekly diaries show that on the weekends the children’s play expanded to include different kinds of play activities with friends, parents, or siblings.

In all three cases, the Indian immigrant mothers appreciated their new knowledge and showed a willingness to continue the practices of play in their children’s lives. The mothers noticed that play helps children reduce their stress and teaches children how to learn from their mistakes. Even though continuity of play is valued and respected in higher education as an extracurricular activity, these mothers still feel apprehensive about the focus on assessment-based higher education. This apprehension may eventually disrupt the children’s play practices.

The Indian immigrant mothers have supported and encouraged play in their children’s early years, but they believe that their children’s play practices might need to be reconsidered when the children enter middle school. As the mothers mentioned, play may sometimes then seem to be “the opposite to learning” (Jiang, n.d., p. 2). More specifically, the children’s play may need to be tailored to the children’s academic needs and demands. The mothers prioritized academics for their elder children believing that this would help to secure the children’s futures (Saraswathi & Dutta, 2010). This may happen again when the younger children enter middle school; play may become a lower priority, perhaps an activity associated with recreation and leisure. Acculturation (Berry, 1997) describes how individuals retain their traditional cultures when exposed to the beliefs and practices of other cultures. A gradual process, acculturation begins when one
is exposed to new cultural experiences and adopts the beliefs and behaviors of the host
culture without abandoning his or her culture of origin. The three immigrant mothers’
inclination is to retain their own cultural beliefs upon migration but to gradually adapt
them as necessary (Cote & Bornstein, 2005). Given that ethnic identity influences an
individual’s beliefs, values, and practices, the Asian-Indian immigrant mothers’ ethnic
identities can be seen to influence their perceptions of play in their children’s early years,
but as the children grow up, the mothers’ own cultural practices may take on a more
dominant role. This means that education may be more valued than play in their
children’s lives during the children’s middle- school years than it is during the early-
childhood years. As the model of acculturation suggests (Berry, 1997), these Indian
immigrant mothers’ adjustment to and association with the host culture regarding play
fall into the integrated category, as they are adopting characteristics of both cultures, the
U.S. and India, and becoming “bicultural.”

**Additional Findings**

In play, children advance their understanding of themselves and others, their
knowledge of the physical world, and their aptitude to communicate with peers and
adults. Many early childhood theorists and practitioners advocate for the importance of
play in stimulating children’s development. Play brings children the opportunity to create
their own learning experiences, and to practice and consolidate their newly acquired
concepts and skills, which are beneficial for the children’s next learning stage (Piaget,
1967). Vygotsky (1978) proposed that children would perform beyond their usual level
when they engaged in play “in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself” (p. 102). Consequently, play is a critical vehicle for developing children’s multiple foundational capacities (NAEYC, 2009). Play is typically and less common for 9 years olds however in this study the target children were engaged with play and play-like activities with families’ supportive visions. As all three participant mothers were nourishing their children’s play by encouraging their interest in writing, building with Legos, and pretended play as teacher along with their children’s other play activities. Moreover, the mothers wanted to engage with their children’s play as a facilitator even later in their lives. By way of the opportunities and influences from the dominant culture these immigrant mothers came to view play as a valuable experience in early childhood and consequently encouraged their children to engage in play.

The perspective of valuing play as a vehicle for learning was highly emphasized in the immigrant-mothers’ responses. All three participant mothers especially respected the Indian parenting style; parental support, guidance, and engagement, but with a few moderations (see Table 6). In India, the family is the longest existing institution, regardless of the family members’ ages, changes, religions, and political views. Tuli (2012) argues that “[t]he family is a hub of all activity from the day a child is born” (p. 82). Traditionally in India, the word “family” means a joint family with at least three living generations: grandparents, parents, and their offspring live in the same household, contributing to and sharing a common income, food, values, and faith. Familial collectivism influences most aspects of Indian life, including childrearing, children’s future career choices, and children’s academic and play activities. Loyalty, integrity, and unity combine to form the foundation of Indian families and the Indian culture more
broadly. Obedience to authority, passivity, and interdependence are highly valued (Parmer, Harkness, & Super, 2004). It applied for the target children’s play too as their play and play like activities were pertain to relations with older sibling, father and grandparents.

**Implications**

This study helps professionals to better understand the role of ethnic identity and adjustment styles among immigrant families. In particular, it educates how the natal values shaped by ethnic identities intersect with and are shaped by knowledgeable decisions that come with migration. Deep-rooted cultural practices can shift through the process of assimilation and adaptation; cultural practices can be evaluated and applied through the evaluation of the educated mind. As a result, primarily unstructured and informal play practices among parents/family (Chaudhury & Shukla, 2014) can be changed based on the children’s developmental needs.

**Strengths of this study**

One of the primary strengths of this study is its data-generation procedure. To understand immigrant Indian mothers’ perceptions about their changing views of play and their applications of play, the researcher used various methods to generate data. The combination of data- collection approaches allowed for a more in-depth investigation as well as comprehensive understanding of the immigrant Indian mothers views of play in
their children’s early years. Since the mothers were well-informed and highly educated, they recognized the need for this study. As a result, despite their busy professional lives and the children’s activities, the mothers made time to contribute to the study.

Member checking is another of the primary strengths of this study. This study offered all three participant-mothers the opportunity to review its outline for the interpretation of the data they had provided. By sharing the findings with the participant-mothers and allowing them to critically consider the findings and make comments on them, the researcher increased the accuracy and completeness of the findings, while simultaneously improving the validity of the study. In order to complete the process of member checking, which is an individual process using the interpreted pieces (Creswell, 2009), the researcher asked for each participant-mother’s comments. All three of the participant-mothers felt comfortable participating and agreed with the interpretations of the data presented by the researcher.

**Limitations of this study**

India is a nation characterized by cultural diversity and plurality on many levels. However, this study is limited to those who are part of the middle to upper socioeconomic class. More specifically, this study is restricted mainly to immigrant mothers from the city of Kolkata. As discussed earlier, there is significant diversity within India in terms of ethnicity, culture, languages, and resources available. Therefore, studying one section of the population within a particular city cannot possibly produce data representative of all of India or even all of Kolkata. However, this study is a preliminary attempt to explore only three immigrant mothers’ beliefs and practices.
regarding play, as well as to determine the mothers’ goals for their children and where play fits into them. The participation of a full cohort of mothers’ would certainly have enhanced the study.

Another limitation of this study is this study did not involve using several different investigators in the analysis process. Therefore, the finding is missing a broader and deeper understanding of how the different investigators view the issue.

**Recommendations for further research**

To understand the more profound aspects of a specific culture, it is important to know not only the culture’s major holidays, religious customs, dress, and food, but also the social ideas, values, and goals that shape attitudes towards childrearing. The increased growth of the Indian immigrant population in the U.S. makes it crucial that we better understand the experiences, values, and beliefs of Indian immigrant parents.

The current study findings provided a deeper understanding about three Indian-American immigrant mothers’ beliefs and practices regarding play in their children’s early years. A longitudinal study of Indian-American mothers’ attitudes towards play would be particularly helpful in extending this line of thought. Such a study could provide a more in-depth understanding of several immigrant families from India whose engagement, development, and progress in life would be tracked through middle school, college, and if possible, into the children’s emergence as adults with their own families. This kind of study would help researchers to understand mothers’ beliefs and practices, as well as the results of those beliefs and practices, over a longer period of time. This kind
of study could also be repeated in a large city with a large Asian-Indian immigrant population where there might be Asian-Indians of various social classes. Therefore, the participation of a full cohort of mothers’ would certainly have enhanced the study.

**Additional Future Research**

Future research is warranted on first-born children. Also, studying both the children, the first and second born in their early age will be helpful to understand the changes distinctly. Researching first-born children who are younger will be beneficial to perceive how changes may be more vivid than revealed in this case study of second born children who were nine years old. Also, a study with the mothers’ first-born child would help to understand their restrictive view of play in a broader prospective.
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441-463.


Appendix A: Consent Form for Mothers

Mothers’ Perception about Changes in their Beliefs about Play
A Study of Immigrant Indian Mothers

Curriculum and Instruction Early Childhood Education
Pennsylvania State University

My name is Nandini Sengupta, and I am a doctoral student at the department of Curriculum and Instruction Early Childhood Education at Penn State University. I am inviting you to participate in a research study on immigrant Indian parents’ particularly mothers, who are residing in America views on and perceptions of children’s play and the importance attaches to this activity.

As researcher, my intention is to understand the beliefs of the immigrant mothers about play, who were born and raised in India and came to United State as an immigrant, like myself. Specifically, this research study is interested in unearthing the relationship between a child’s play and their mother’s perception of its impact on future development. By finding out mothers’ beliefs, attitudes, and engagement with play, the study will further unveil influences the child have on immigrant Asian Indian American mothers believes about play.

For this study, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and then I would like to conduct three interview sessions. I would interview primarily you and then the father and the target child too. This will take place at your home and each session should take 60-90 minutes. During our conversation I will be a taking notes of our discussion and with your permission, I would like to record the details of our conversation using an audio recorder. This audiotape will be reviewed only by my advisor, my dissertation
committee upon their request and me. The tape will be destroyed immediately after finalization of my dissertation.

All information collected during the study will be kept private and confidential and your names will never be used for reporting findings of the study. The completed questionnaire will be kept in a locked cabinet in researcher’s home.

Involvement in this study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. There is not any physical risk involved in this project, however some of the questions could be perceived as sensitive and upsetting. I will be available to answer any questions that you have.

The benefit of this research will be helping me understand childrearing practices through play in the Asian Indian American families, how their children influenced their mothers’ believes about play in their different stages of lives, and how play relate to childhood development? Therefore, this study will focus on the synthesis of the traditional heritage of Indian culture in the United States’ social landscape, especially in play habits and ideations.

If you have any questions about the research project, please call my advisor Dr. James Johnson (814) 865-2230. In addition, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at (315) 443-3013 if you have questions about the research or your rights as participants.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Signature of mother    Date    Print name of mother
Appendix B: Assent Form for the Children

Informed Assent Form
Mothers’ Perception about Changes in their Beliefs about Play
Case Study of Immigrant Indian Mothers

Curriculum and Instruction Early Childhood Education
Pennsylvania State University

My name is Nandini Sengupta, and I am a doctoral student in the department of Curriculum and Instruction Early Childhood Education at Penn State University. I am inviting you to participate in a research study as your parents are from India. A research study is a learning process. In this study I am going to learn more about mothers’ view about play.

If you want to participate in this study, I will ask you couple of questions. It will not take more than 30 minutes. During the conversation if you feel that you don’t know the answers some of the questions, please let me know. Even, you can let me know you don’t want to answer any of the questions.

With your parent’s permission I am going to interview you. Even though, they gave permission, that doesn’t mean you are forced to be in this study. You have every right to decide to do or not to join in this study. It will be acceptable with your parents and I.

Please sign your name below, if you agree to be part of my study.

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________________

Name of Participant ___________________________

Signature of Investigator ________________________ Date ___________
Appendix C
Asian Indian American Mother’s Intake Questionnaire

Part: A
Thank you for taking time to help me out on this research project

Background Information

1. Name _________________________________
2. Age _________________________________
3. Educational Level ________________________________
4. Your Occupation ________________________________
5. Marital Status ________________________________
6. Where were you born? _____________________________
7. What is your mother tongue? ________________________
8. How long have you been in the USA? _________________
9. How many members live in your household? _____________

10. Name Relationship to the child Age
1._____________________________________________________________________
2._____________________________________________________________________
3._____________________________________________________________________
4._____________________________________________________________________
5._____________________________________________________________________

Please tell me about your child who is participating in this study with your answer to the following questions.
1. Is the child born in the USA? _________
2. What is your relationship with the child? ____________
3. How old is the child? ______________________
4. Child’s gender ______________________
5. Does the child have any siblings? ___________ How many? ______
6. What is the birth order of the child? ______________________
7. Does the child go to school? _______? Private_______ Public_______

**Questions to the mother**

1. How do you identify yourself?
   a) Indian
   b) Indian-American
   c) American from India
   d) American

2. You are away from your home country for so long, do you still believe in Indian values (e.g., families, childhood education, childhood play). Please tell me why? How you practice these values in your everyday life?

3. How do you consider American values (e.g., families, childhood education, childhood play)? If you practice these values, please tell me how? If you don’t, please tell me why?
Part B

1. Did you have any siblings?

2. Besides you who else lived with you as a child in your family?

3. Both of your parents were working parents? If yes, what were their professions?

4. What was your daily routine of life as a child? How often did you play?

5. Did your parents encourage you to play? Did they play with you?

6. With whom you used to play? Did you prefer the outdoors games or indoor games?

7. Did your parents encourage you to read storybooks? Did they read with you?

8. How was your weekend? Busy? With what kind of activities?

9. During the weekdays/schooldays did you involved with any activity?

10. When did you come to US? Did you come here alone or with your husband? Did you come here as a student or employee?

11. Before you became a mother what was your typical day in this new country?

12. During that period did you noticed anything that influenced you as a going to be mother later in your life?

13. Did your husband and you made any specific plan to raise your children in this new country?

14. What was the most important Indian tradition/thing you wanted to continue as an Indian immigrant mother with your children in their early age? Did your husband agree with this plan?
Appendix: D

Drawing Task and Instruction

Steps of the Procedure

First, the participants will be asked to complete an initial drawing task. This drawing task is given first to develop rapport with the participants.

Stage 1

Fold the paper (8” by 11”) into quarters and label level them along the bottom as follows:

1. Parent top left: 0 to 5 years / Parent, top right: 5 to 10 years
   Child, bottom left: 0 to 5 years/ Child, Bottom right: 5 to 10 years.

2. Please draw several pictures remembering play together with your child in the provided paper (target child) at babyhood, toddlerhood, pre-school, and primary school age.

Stage 2

This stage consists of administering a structured open-ended interview with the drawing items:

1. What are you playing (refer to drawing)?
2. What have you drawn your child playing (refer to drawing)?
3. What are you playing together (as mentioned before, babyhood, toddlerhood, preschool, and primary) with your child?
4. Do you still enjoy playing? What do you like to play now? Do you like to play with your child? How often you usually play with your child? Where do you like to play most, indoors or outdoors?

5. Is there any similarity with your play and your child’s playing style or play choices? If you noticed it is different than yours, how it is different?
Appendix: E

Open-ended Semi-structured interview

Session # 1

Interview questions

With the display of the provided pictures of the target child’s play in his/her different ages (e.g., baby, toddlerhood, pre-school age, and elementary school ages)

1. Please tell me about this picture: how old he/she was in this picture? What is he/she is playing here? Can you recall the event? I am really eager to hear the story.

2. Do you think that play assists to shape a person? What about your child?

3. Please tell me why you are thinking that? If you have an event to share, that will be excellent!
   a. Can you tell me more?
   b. Can you share any other circumstance?

4. Do you think you can separate play in two categories, as “good play” or “bad play”? How you are categorizing and practicing that with your child?
   a. Please explain it little bit more.
   b. Why you think it is a good play, not a bad play?
   c. Why you think it is a bad play, not a good play?

Q. How the American Indian immigrant mothers think they may have change?
5. Can you think a few examples about good play and bad play? Please specify your thoughts.
   a. Please, tell me little bit more, if possible.

6. Do you think play can encourage your child to develop better thinking abilities?
   a. Why you are thinking that?
   b. Please explain with some example.

7. In your opinion, for your child, is play a helpful tool to improve his mathematical and language skills? Any event restore in this picture?
   a. Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a baby.
   b. Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a toddler.

8. Is play supportive towards teaching communication and problem solving skills?
   Any picture from this display is helping you to remember or retail the story about that?
   a. Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a baby.
   b. Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a toddler.

9. Do you think play can assist your child to develop social skills? Do you recall any event that you can share?
   a. Please tell me more.
   b. Can you give me an example?

Q. How the Indian immigrant mothers describe their parenting goals and practices, and how play, and different kinds of play, may relate to these childrearing goals?
Appendix: F

Interview Questions to Mother

Session #2

With the help of the provided pictures the following questions will be asked:

10. Imagine that you are in India. Do you think your views and perceptions of play would be different than now? Do you consider your child has a position in this change? Do you think any other factors have a role here, such as peer, friends, school culture etc.?
   a. Please explain how and why you think it will be different?
   b. Please explain how and why it will not be different?

11. Do you believe your view or belief about play is influenced by your native culture or the dominating culture? Do you consider your child has a role in this change? If you remember an event or story to share that will be wonderful!
   a. Please discuss it how it is influenced?
   b. Please give me some example.
   c. Please tell me why you are thinking that?

12. Do you remember how you played with your older child?
   a. What kind of play?
   b. How often you played with him/her?
   c. During that playtime, did you prefer indoor or outdoor play the most?
d. Do you consider your older child has an active role to shape your view about play? Perhaps it was just the beginning of the transformation of your view?

e. As you are experiencing the new culture with him/her first time, do you consider he/she help you to build the foundation of your belief about play?

13. Do you consider their father is contributing to shape your view about play?

a. Why you are thinking that?

b. Does he contributing (active participation) when you and your child play? As a family event?

c. Does he encourage your child’s play?

d. Do you reflect he is influencing your view about play? How and why you are thinking that?

Q. Is there a change in the mothers’ views about their children’s play over time? For example, how do mothers see the influence of various sources on changes in beliefs about play? (e.g. own child, an older sibling, fathers, peers, and friends affect a given mothers’ views and attitudes towards play in light of maternal self-consideration, or the mother’s reconstructing her history of rearing the target child?)
Session #3

Interview Questions:

14. Do you think your child has an impact on your believes about play in different stages of his/her life?
   a. When your child was a baby, what kind of impact he/she had? Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.
   b. When he/she was a toddler, what kind of impact he/she had? Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.
   c. What kind of impact he/she had in the preschool on your belief about play Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.
   d. Please tell me about the influence he/she has now on your attitudes about play? Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.

15. How you characterized the influence of your child play on your believe about play?
   a. As your child growing up in different stages (e.g., baby, toddler, pre-school, and elementary school)?
   b. Do you consider it is different than his/her older sibling? Why and how it is different?

Q. Is there a change in the mothers’ views of their children’s play over time? If the target child has an older sibling how much were parental ethno-theories pertaining to play already altered because of the effects of this child on parental ethno-theories?
Appendix: G

Question to the Child

Researcher will prefer to take the interview in the child’s play area

1. What are you playing?

2. Do you play all by yourself or with a partner? Who is your partner?

3. What is your favorite playtime?

4. What is your favorite play?
   a. Do you like to play inside or outside the best?
   b. Do you like to play with your friends or without your friends?
   c. Do you prefer to play with your mother, father, older brother, or with all of them together?
   d. Do you prefer to play in your house or in your friend’s house? Why do you like that?

5. Do you wish to do any particular play activity with your mother, father, and brother, you experienced in your friend’s house or you hard in your school from your friend? What is the name of that play? Can you please explain that to me? Why you want that?

____________________

To understand target children’s play practices and play settings.
### Appendix: H

**Observations Categories**

#### Play areas of the target child:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom and living room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate playroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside play areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Kind of toys:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational toys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Participant 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legos or similar kinds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Ball or similar kinds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mothers’ engagement:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Encouraging play environment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Daily diary for a week

Monday

7:00am-
9:00am

3:00pm –
5:00pm

5:00pm-
8:00pm

8:00pm-
10:00pm
Tuesday

7:00am-
9:00am

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3:00pm –
5:00pm

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5:00pm-
8:00pm

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

8:00pm-
10:00pm
**Wednesday**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00am-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00pm -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00pm-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00pm-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thursday

7:00am–

9:00am

3:00pm –

5:00pm

5:00pm–

8:00pm

8:00pm–

10:00pm
Friday

7:00am-
9:00am

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3:00pm –
5:00pm

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5:00pm-
8:00pm

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

8:00pm–
10:00pm
Weekend’s activities

Saturday

7:00am -
9:00am

..............................................................................................................................

9:00am -
12:00pm

..............................................................................................................................

12:00pm -
3:00pm

..............................................................................................................................

3:00pm –
5:00pm
5:00pm-
8:00pm

8:00pm-
10:00pm

Special notes:
Sunday

7:00am -
9:00am

9:00am -
12:00pm

12:00pm -
3:00pm

3:00pm -
5:00pm
5:00pm-
8:00pm

8:00pm-
10:00pm

Special notes:
## Appendix J: Telephone calls for spot-checking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to the mother</th>
<th>Case #1</th>
<th>Case #2</th>
<th>Case #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your child doing now?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long she/he has been engaged with this activity?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you participating with her/him?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any family members participating with her/him in this activity?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider this activity as a learning activity or something else, like a fun activity?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K: Analysis of the data

Target questions to be answered in the analysis of the data

1. Based on my consideration on play:
   a. How it is expressed?
   b. How it is remembered?
   c. How it is viewed as changing?
   d. How and why are changes happening under different conditions seen in each of the three cases?

2. Tap into cultural variations, or cultural contexts that foster and/or impede a number of types of
   a. Play
   b. Play settings and perceived benefits.

3. To highlighting the maternal reconstructions that include elicited information concerning how the child might have influenced parental beliefs and attitudes about play can lead to improved understanding
   a. What play ideas or values have been affected?
   b. How and why it is initiated (through the experience of parenting)?

4. Does this play pattern or playing style helping to shape the child’s identity?
### Table 8: Interview to the mothers

#### Session # 1

| Q. Please tell me about this picture: How old he/she was in this picture? What is he/she is playing here? Can you recall the event? I am really eager to hear the story. | Using SR to stimulate mothers’ reflection  
- Stimulation of the memory  
- Play Settings  
- Belief about play: e.g., what kind of play they played? How often they played? etc. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q. Do you think that play assists to shape a person? What about your child?</td>
<td>Benefit of play; positive or negative? Ideological becoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Q. Please tell me why you are thinking that? If you have an event to share, that will be excellent!  
- Can you tell me more?  
- Can you share any other circumstance? | Establish themes and connections that help to make sense of collected data |
| Q. Do you think you can separate play in two categories, as “good play” or “bad play”? How you are categorizing and practicing that with your child? Please explain it little bit more. Why you think it is a good play, not a bad play? Why you think it is a bad play, not a good play? | Story telling; narrative approach to help to shape the understating |
| Q. Do you think play can encourage your child to develop better thinking abilities? Why are you thinking that? Please explain with some example. | Acculturation affect  
Possibility of Ideological becoming |
| Q. In your opinion, for your child, is play is a helpful tool to improve his mathematical and language skills? Any event restore in this picture?  
- Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a baby.  
- Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a toddler. | Benefit of play; positive or negative?  
Stimulating mother for rich and detailed story to collect a rich data |
| Q. Is play supportive towards teaching communication and problem solving skills?  
- Is any picture from this display helping | Using SR to stimulate mothers’ reflection |

217
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. What do American Indian immigrant mothers reflect when asked to provide an account about their children play, settings, and benefits?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>you to remember or retail the story about that?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please give me an example from your memory, as your child was a toddler.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs and benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideological becoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. Do you think play can assist your child to develop social skills? Do you recall any event that you can share?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please tell me more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you give me an example?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall, effects on parental ethno-theories related to play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideological becoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Interview to the mother

**Session # 2**

| Q. Imagine that you are in India. Do you think your views and perceptions of play would be different than now? Do you consider your child has a position in this change? Do you think any other factors have a role here, such as peer, friends, school culture etc.? | Reported change in views about their children’s play how are
| | • The child,
| | • The father,
| | • Peers, and friends affecting the mothers' views and attitudes about play
| | • Please explain how and why you think it will be different?
| | • Please explain how and why you think it will not be different?
| Q. Please explain how and why do you believe your view or belief about play is influenced by your native culture or the dominating culture? Do you consider your child has a role in this change? If you remember an event or story to share that will be wonderful! | Story telling; narrative approach to help to shape the understating
| | • Please discuss it how.
| | • Please give me some example
| | Acculturation affect

Q. Is there a reported change in views about their children’s play? More specifically, how is the child, the father, peers, and friends affecting the mothers' views and attitudes about play according to maternal self-consideration as reconstructing their histories of child-rearing the target child?
**Session # 2 (continues)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. Do you remember how you played with your older child?</th>
<th>Older child’s effect/influence on mother’s understanding about play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kind of play?</td>
<td>How it help to shape mother’s thought about play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often you played with him/her?</td>
<td>Understanding reconstructions of maternal consideration about play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During that playtime, did you prefer indoor or outdoor play the most?</td>
<td>Mother’s preferences of play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider your older child has an active role to shape your view about play? Perhaps it was just the beginning of the transformation of your view?</td>
<td>Understanding reconstructions of maternal consideration about play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As you are experiencing the new culture with him/her first time, do you consider he/she help you to build the foundation of your belief about play?</td>
<td>Overall understanding the older child’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Do you consider their father is contributing to shape your view about play?</td>
<td>Father’s effect/influence on mother’s understanding about play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why you are thinking that?</td>
<td>Understanding mother’s perspective about father’s influence/family partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does he encourage your child’s play?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider their father is contributing to shape your view about play?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does he contributing (active participation) when</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q. If the target child has an older sibling how much were parental ethno-theories pertaining to play already altered because of the effects of this child on parental ethno-theories? How are the child and the father affecting the mothers' views and attitudes about play according to maternal self-consideration as reconstructing their histories of child-rearing the target child?
### Table 10: Interview to the mother

#### Session # 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. Do you think your child has an impact on your beliefs about play in different stages of his/her life?</th>
<th>Reported change in views about their children’s play how are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• When your child was a baby, what kind of impact he/she had? Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.</td>
<td>• The child,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When he/she was a toddler, what kind of impact he/she had? Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.</td>
<td>• The father,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What kind of impact he/she had in the preschool on your belief about play Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.</td>
<td>• Peers, and friends affecting the mothers' views and attitudes about play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please tell me about the influence he/she has now on your attitudes about play? Can you recognize any event? These photographs of your child might help you to remember.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acculturation affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parental ethno-theories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q. How you characterized the influence of your child play on your believe about play?

- As your child growing up in different stages (e.g., baby, toddler, pre-school, and elementary school)?

- Acculturation effect
- Parental ethno-theories

Q. How the mothers presented the change?
### Table 11: Interview to the target child

#### Session # 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>Do you play all by yourself or with a partner? Who is your partner?</th>
<th>Understanding the child’s play habit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
<td>What is your favorite playtime; in the morning, before going to school, at recess, after school, or home?</td>
<td>Understanding Developmental-Niche Model Ideological becoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
<td>What is your favorite play? Do you like to play inside or outside the best? With friends or without friends? In your house or your friends house? Why you like that?</td>
<td>Ecological Model Acculturation Ideological becoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding the validity of the collected data

| Q. | Do you wish to do any particular play activity with your mother, father, and brother, which you experienced in your friend’s house or you did hear it in your school from your friend? What is the name of that play? Can you please explain that to me? Why you want that? | Understanding Family partnership Ideological becoming |
VITA

Nandini Sengupta
E-mail address: nandini@ptd.net
Phone no: 570-3369887

Education

Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction (anticipated, 2016). The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, USA.
Immigrant Indian mothers’ perception of play and play’s relationship to childrearing goals: a case study.
Master of Science in Elementary Education (2011). Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA, USA.
Bachelor in Elementary Education (1992). Calcutta University, Kolkata, WB, India.
Master of Arts in Literature (1990). Jadavpur University, Kolkata, WB, India.
Bachelor of Arts in Literature (1988). Calcutta University, Kolkata, WB, India.

Professional Experience

Teacher (1990-1993). Rajonikanta School, Kolkata, India.

Conference Presentation

Examining Play and Culture to Enhance Education and Life Experience, The Association for the Study of Play (TASP) 40th Annual International Conference (2013)
Transcultural Play: Expression and Meaning, The Association for the Study of Play (TASP) 41st Annual International Conference (2014)
Comparison of Different Culture’s Play, The Association for the Study of Play (TASP) 41st Annual International Conference (2014)
A Day of Transcultural PLAY: Teaching Transcultural Diversity ~ Playing Multicultural Games, Central Susquehanna Association for the Education of Young Children (CSAECY) 21st Annual Conference (2016).

International Activity

Volunteer: Nirmala Shishu Bhavan (Home for Children); Mother Teresa’s House; Missionaries of Charity; Kolkata, WB, India. Shisu Tirtha School (Temple for children); Kolkata, WB, India.